1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

685 or fields, though there is a feeling (not very strong) that *Thyak-dum*[9] will protect the houses to which he is attached. Lepcha economy is founded on the supposition that people do not steal and that no precautions are necessary against theft; consequently when thefts do occur they are particularly disquieting. There is no social apparatus for discovering the unwitnessed thief, or for forcing a confession; in such cases recourse may be had to supernatural powers, in the form of malicious sorcery. Malicious sorcery can in theory be directed against a personal enemy, but all the instances that I heard of were directed against unknown thieves.

754 Both lamas and Mun have traditions of malicious sorcery, of
756 getting devils to plague a man or devour his soul; but Mun are
793 considered to be less expert in the matter, taking a month while a lama should only take three days. The Mun are said to work by feeding a particular devil until it is contented and grateful, whereupon it will do whatever is asked. Lamas have two methods; the most learned can summon the victim's soul in the form of an insect and destroy it ritually, whereupon the victim dies at once, or they can summon a devil and hand over the victim to him. To kill a particular person by sorcery it is necessary to have some of their 'dirt'[10]—that is hair clippings, finger nails, or clothes that have been long worn; in the case of an unknown thief a portion of the stolen object, or of some other object which had been in long association with it is desirable, though not essential.

To kill the soul of a person an altar should be erected in the home in front of which is placed a plate covered with rice flour or very fine ashes; around this is arranged a fence of twelve pieces of wood inscribed with the victim's name arranged in pairs meeting at the top; inside the fence is the man's 'dirt' wrapped up in a piece of paper inscribed with his name. The lama then waves a stick with a piece of cloth on it and summons the victim's soul, which will presently arrive in the form of some winged insect; if the man is innocent the insect will not pass the fence but will go straight to the altar and worship there; if it settles on the plate it can be killed, whereupon the victim will immediately die.

To give a person over to a devil the proceeding is somewhat different. The victim's dirt is wrapped up in a piece of paper which

[9] See Chapter Two, pp. 74–75.

[10] The collective noun, used by Lepchas to indicate the exuviae, the portions of a victim's body or clothing which can be used for malicious sorcery, is *mari*, which means literally 'body dirt.'

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

has been smeared with blood and arrow-poison, and inscribed with the victim's name and a spell written in Tibetan characters (the spell itself is believed to be in Burmese). This is put into a bamboo *patyoot* and is then offered to a man-eating devil, together with *cherkem*, consisting of grain floating in *chi* and blood, and other offerings. When the sorcerer is apprised of the arrival of the devil, either by a dream or by seeing him in reality he says to it ' So and so is my enemy, and I give his flesh to you to eat ' ; after that the bamboo is buried near one of the devil's houses. To make a person ill a quite simple ceremony is performed inside the monastery.

Tafoor, who told me about these rituals, is one of the three lamas of the neighbourhood who know how to perform them ; the other two are the two Dorjé Lapoon, who received the knowledge from learned Tibetan lamas. Tafoor has never practised himself, and is not sure if the first Dorjé Lapoon ever did, but his uncle, the second Dorjé Lapoon, who taught him, has killed two people by sorcery. The first was when he was a student ; a man came to his teacher and asked him to sorcerise somebody for him, and the teacher told his pupil to try his hand. The second instance was many years later, when his knife was stolen at a monastery feast ; the thief, though he did not know it at the time, was one of the second Dorjé Lapoon's young pupils ; the pupil did not know that the sorcery had been started against him or he could have averted it by returning the knife ; only after his death, three months later, was his identity known and the lost knife recovered.

Nowadays the second Dorjé Lapoon refuses to perform sorcery any longer. The Maharajah has issued stringent orders forbidding the practice, and he himself, when on pilgrimage to Kathmandhu, made a vow not to indulge further in such wicked acts. Some time ago both Tafoor and Takneum *youmi* had cardamum fruit stolen and asked the second Dorjé Lapoon to sorcerise the thieves ; but he replied that it was wicked to kill a man and that thieves should be dealt with by the police. According to lamaist ethics, it is a sin to kill a man by sorcery, but not a grievous sin if the lama afterwards helps his victim's soul to heaven. To kill a man with weapons is a far greater sin ; for every person's body is the home of a hundred small gods called Tamba Rigya, and they are destroyed with the body.

About eighteen years ago the husband of Pumri—now the wife of the second Dorjé Lapoon, but at that time his uncle's wife—had a goat stolen ; he found some of the stolen meat and brought

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

754 it to the second Dorjé Lapoon and requested him to sorcerise the unknown thieves. Since the aggrieved party was his uncle, he ●793 agreed and started the necessary preparations. But while he was making the *cherkem* his elder brother, also a lama, arrived, saw what he was doing, and dissuaded him. Thereupon Pumri's husband took the meat to a Mun who has since died; he performed the sorcery and all the members of the thief's family (it is the family to which Kurma's second wife belonged) died one after the other; eight or nine are now dead and the family is almost extinct.

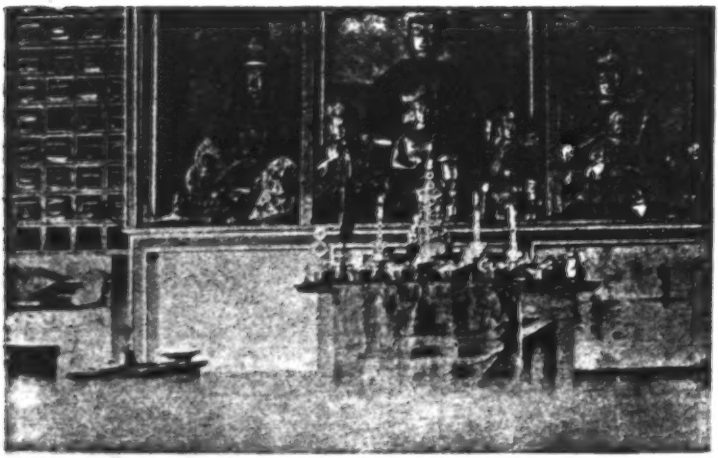
This is the last recorded case of sorcery being exercised in the district. The tradition is generally known about, and a certain awe of the three lamas who have this special knowledge is felt. But in Zongu there is no fear of one's 'dirt' being taken and used maliciously, and cut hair or nails are let lie where they fall; when they are in foreign parts however Lepchas say that they take care to burn or bury their 'dirt'. The Lepchas have also added an uncanonical rider to the Tibetan tradition of sorcery to the effect that the sorcery when it is directed against a particular person will only hurt that person if he or she is actually guilty; if he is not, the devil will return and destroy the sender. As opposed to the fear of poisoning the fear of sorcery is non-existent, and the subject is practically never mentioned in casual conversation.

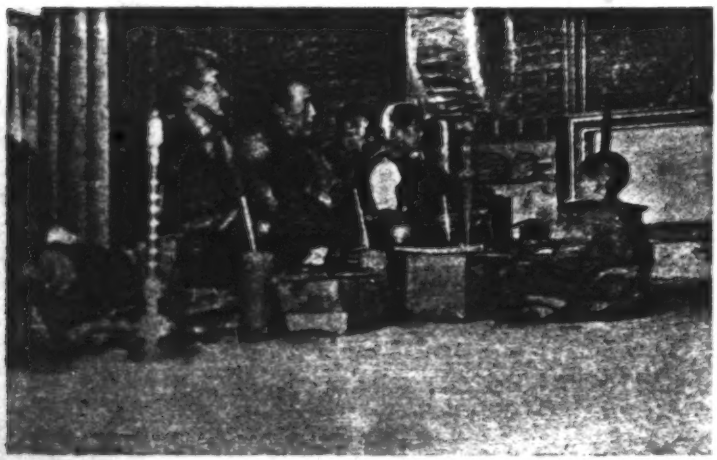
684 Adultery, as will be seen later, is practically never taken any notice of; but if the instance should be particularly flagrant the aggrieved husband has two ways of punishing the lover; he can either beat the lover, thereby shaming him, or he can go and inform the Mandal. If he does this the Mandal will summon a meeting of the elders of the village and will then go to the house of the lover and summon him to confess; if he does so he has to pay to the husband either one chicken and a pig, or Rs. 5/-. If neither lover will confess the matter is abandoned. Discovered adultery is not a cause of enmity either between husband and wife or between husband and lover; only in the case of persistent adultery, and of the woman [586] showing a really marked preference for the lover, would the marriage be broken up.

685 The only other cause of dispute inside the village is the suspicion of boundary marks to fields having been moved. The only case recorded of this occurred fifteen years ago between an old man, since dead, and the father of Aga; this dispute, however, was patched up without calling in the Mandal, *youmi* and *gyapön* who would normally settle such disputes, if the first representations

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

778
793
796





Above: THE MONASTERY ALTAR DECORATED FOR THE CEREMONY IN HONOUR OF KINCHENJUNGA

Below: THE LAMAS PRAY. OPPOSITE SITS CHIMPET TO BEAT THE GONG

Note the *patyoot* of *chi* by each lama.

[facing p. 184]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

tively Sakya Muni, Guru Rimpuché (beloved teacher), or Tashey-*thing* has been equated with Tak-bo-*thing*, in Mun theology the first man and the first hero, the grandson of Itpomu, the Creative Mother, and the two change places in mythology, according to the preference of the speaker, even in stories quite unsuitable to lamaist ethics (for example in the stories of the origin of eating fish and pork, where the hero kills the original fish- or pig-devil). And the confusion does not end there; after Tak-bo-*thing* and Tashey-*thing* have been telescoped into one person they are again separated into two with two simultaneous births in different places: the Mun hero is said to have been born underground at the same moment as the lamaist saint was born in heaven.

These confusions however are more obvious to the analytical European than to the practising Lepcha. With the exception of the crucial point of killing animals the Lepchas do not appear to be conscious of the implied contradictions; and the lamas through their education in the scriptures and through the casting of horoscopes have already such a training in sophistry that they almost automatically reconcile any implicit contraditions. In by far the greater number of ceremonies for private individuals Mun and lamas perform simultaneously contradictory rites for identical ends, with the Mun usually in the 'kitchen' and the lamas in the 'parlour.' Inside the monastery precincts Mun are never allowed to practise; but in a number of the calendrical festivals on 'neutral' ground the two perform side by side. Only for one private ceremony are the Mun entirely excluded; they can take no part at all in the funeral ceremonies of a lama. On the other hand the Mun have the speciality of most of the ceremonies connected with crops and hunting and some apotropaic rites.

Theoretically there is no quarrel between the two religions, but there is a certain veiled rivalry between their priests. The lamas accuse the Mun of using their supernatural powers for unworthy private ends, for instance killing magically the spouses of people they desire so as to be able to enjoy them without interruption, and the Mun accuse the lamas of being more sensual than the average man, more dependent on constant sexual intercourse and drink; abstention is possible for the layman, intolerable for the lama. As far as drink is concerned I think the charge is justified; the amount of *chi* consumed by lamas is incalculable. As soon as they settle down for a ceremony a *patyoot* is placed beside them, and constantly refilled and renewed; the chanting—and lamaist

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

ceremonies may last anything from six hours to as many days—is thirsty work; and in the latter half of the services the officiants are seldom quite sober. These charges are never made openly or by one priest to another; in public they are quite amicable, though they usually affect to ignore the other's presence and performance.

The mythological justification for this amity between the two religions is that the patron spirits are husband and wife: the lamaist Tashey-*thing* is the husband, and the Mun (always a female spirit) the wife. For this reason, it is said, the lamas are stronger, and especially have more influence with the gods; the Mun on the other hand are perhaps more competent to deal with devils.

This attitude towards husband and wife, in which the husband is considered automatically the more powerful, is in itself probably a Tibetan import. For the Mun spirit has also another husband in the Padem (or Bum-*thing*); this latter resembles the Mun save that only men are possessed by it; a Padem is far less powerful than a Mun, and for many men this possession is the first step towards becoming a Mun. In the case of this supernatural husband and wife it is explained that the Mun is the more powerful because she is the wife; and this is far more congruent with the specific Mun mythology in which the female supernaturals are almost always the most important.

It would require far more knowledge than is at present available to be able to state definitely of the Lepcha folk-lore what elements are indigenous, what borrowed from Tibet, and what from other neighbouring tribes. My impression is that by far the greater number of stories told in Zongu, though many have foreign accretions, are of domestic origin. I only heard specifically Tibetan-lamaist stories from pious lamas, and by no means always from them.

ii

It is said that lamaism was introduced into Sikkim in or near 1641, the date of accession of the first lamaist king Penchoo Namgyé. He is said to have been made king by three lamas of the Nyingma-pa or 'Red Hat' sect, the unreformed branch of lamaism; these three lamas were fugitives from Tibet, following the violent struggles between the Yellow Hats and Red Hats and possibly Chinese or Mongolian intervention.

I have not been able to find any conclusive evidence as to the date of the conversion of the Lepchas to lamaism, or of their admission

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

774 The reincarnated soul of a human being arises at the moment of
779 conception and is all through life as it were the mirror image of the body it inhabits. Thus a baby's soul is as weak and feeble as
[751] its body; and it is for this reason that Lepchas always attach a snail-shell round their baby's necks or wrists; it may be that the soul will be pursued by demons and will not have time enough to get back to the midriff under the heart—the normal home of the soul in waking life; the pursued soul can then creep into the snail-shell where it can hide in safety. The souls of very old people are equally feeble; but no hiding place is necessary for them as they are too tough for devils to eat. Anything which happens to the body also happens to the soul, which is aware of it a split second earlier; if the body is cut or maimed or feels any sensation, the same thing occurs to the soul; if this were not so how could we feel anything? In normal waking life a man's body and soul are only separated in the case of violent accident; if for example a man should fall from a tree the soul would make a tremendous effort to separate itself from the body, get down safely and then return to its body afterwards. If the soul falls with the body the soul will be killed and the body die; but if the soul escapes the man will fall unconscious and be later revived when the soul re-enters its house.[1]
[828] Only in sleep or through mystic practices can the soul be separated from the body during life. Madness is believed to be the possession of a demon which imprisons the soul inside the body.

●793 Finally lamaism is a social organisation. The lamas (to a lesser extent the nuns) are arranged in a disciplined hierarchy. They are a section of society which performs for the whole society its religious functions; in return the rest of society should give material support to the lamas. In Tibet this social aspect is extremely important; the lamas possess the greater part of the temporal power and are also as a group an exploiting class; the monasteries own land and the peasants attached to the land are practically monastery serfs. The lower-ranking lamas also work for the benefit of those of higher rank and are possibly as much exploited as the peasants; but they have, at least in theory, the possibility of rising to the higher ranks, which possibilities are completely shut out from the laymen. In Sikkim, as far as I can learn, the social influence of the lamas is considerably less; in Lingthem the monastery as a 'legal person' owns no land; the villagers help to pay for its building and upkeep,

[1] The Lepchas only recognise fainting or unconsciousness through pain; they do not consider fainting through fear or disgust or grief possible.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

and they are expected to support, at any rate in part, the Dorjé Lapoon and the monastery custodian; they also have to give fixed contributions to the feasts which validate the rise in grade of the higher ecclesiastics.

The Lepchas have been converts to lamaism at least one, and probably two centuries, but they have, if I may so express it, sterilised and ignored those aspects of the alien religion which were sharply opposed to their major existing attitudes. They have as it were, swallowed lamaism whole, but excreted the irritating portions. The mythology presented no difficulties; their pantheon was always large and expanding, through the divination of new supernaturals, and further numbers of similar supernaturals were easily accepted; it was understandable that foreigners should know of large numbers of new ones, almost as worthy of worship as the older established ones. The idea of a priesthood in which the priests need training by older priests was also one they already possessed; and that priests should be designated by divination (the horoscope) or by heredity, rather than by the possession of a hereditary spirit was an easy modification of existing attitudes. So too was the idea that the future could be learned by calculation, as well as by dreams and inspiration; the Lepchas have a complete belief in horoscopes and have incorporated them into their lives. Similarly the idea that an essential part of the efficacy of ritual lies in word-for-word repetition was one they already possessed; that, instead of learning by rote, these rituals could be found through the alien art of reading, was to their mind a distinct advantage for lamaism, and the books and those that read them are respected and revered. Similarly mystic contemplation, to expel devils or acquire supernatural powers, had its parallel in the *munthen*, the mystic communion, of the Mun.

The social organisation was a more alien concept; to a certain, though not completely formulated, extent, they have equated the organisation of lamas with that of the family; for a lama to sleep with the wife of an inferior lama is likened to the incest of an elder brother sleeping with his younger brother's wife, though there are no sanctions against such acts; the Dorjé Lapoon are equated with the grandfathers who withdraw from work at the end of their lives to be supported by their sons and grandsons. Nevertheless this parallel does not hold good altogether, and, in so far as they have accepted the social organisation of lamaism the Lepchas have incorporated a new and alien element into their lives. This

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

religion, with the rejection of those elements which are alien to the major cultural attitudes, is probable when the converted culture is fully integrated; I think parallels might be found in the conversion to Hinduism of the Nepali, and some of the native Christian and Mahomedan sects in Africa, and, possibly, among the American negroes. When the society is more or less disrupted and the convert feels himself to be alone in an alien world, individual conversion is likely to be much more complete; the Christian Lepchas with whom I came in contact in India and Gangtok had accepted the individualised Christian ethic, with its sense of sin, completely; their whole character-formation and major attitudes appeared to be modified by this conversion; and I very much regret that I was unable to study this character alteration in any detail. I should like to suggest the axiom that *Fully integrated cultures will only accept in an imported complex those elements which are congruent to the existing major attitudes, or which are felt to fill a want; those elements which are violently opposed to existing attitudes will either be excluded or so modified as to bring them into congruence with existing attitudes.* If this axiom is correct it would appear that we can learn from the observation of primitive societies much about the probable results of imposing violent social changes on simple or more complex societies.

iii

The vocation to become a lama is determined by the horoscope which is cast on the third day after birth. All the children of lamas should themselves become lamas, but in practice usually only the eldest son follows the whole career; the younger ones receive sufficient preliminary instruction to enable them to read one or two sacred manuals. The children of laymen are also occasionally predestined to become lamas, usually because they are reincarnations of dead lamas; should a child so predestined not follow his vocation as a lama he will become a half-wit. It occasionally happens that people who are not predestined to become lamas wish to study; they may do so, but 'their destiny will overcome them'.

If it is seen that the infant is going to become a lama he is presented with a yellow sash, and from a very early age his father will bring him to monastery ceremonies to allow him to get accustomed to the special atmosphere. Between the ages of ten and fifteen a teacher is chosen for the child. The choice of a teacher is supposed to be determined by his knowledge exclusively; under

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

793 875 no circumstances can the biological father teach his own son; any other relative who is properly qualified may do so. Thus Chimpet was being taught by his 'grandfather' the second Dorjé Lapoon. If the teacher resides in the same house no formalities occur, but this is very rare; nearly always teachers are strangers, and often live in a different village to the pupil's parents. When the teacher has been selected the parents present him with a big pig, a load of *chi*, a ceremonial scarf and a rupee and the child goes to live with his teacher for three years, usually working for his teacher in the daytime, and receiving instruction in the evening. The child is allowed to visit his parents from time to time, but if he runs away he will be beaten and sent back. According to Tafoor, when he was a student one teacher might have six or seven pupils, and in consequence emulation increased the general level of knowledge; nowadays in Zongu most teachers have only a single pupil at a time, so that there are no spurs to overcome native indolence.

The preliminary instruction is almost entirely confined to the teaching of reading; there are small excerpts from the scriptures specially prepared for this purpose; the pupil learns by heart one page at a time. He is also taught to a certain extent methods of prayer and the playing of musical instruments, but these branches are pursued more fully when the teacher has given his pupil his ceremonial qualification or *loong*. I cannot find out to what extent this notion of *loong* is Tibetan, and to what extent specifically Lepcha; it recurs in all stages of Lepcha life whenever there is a teacher-pupil situation. When the pupil has learned whatever he is being taught—the ritual of the Mun, a sacred story, the correct method of sacrificing after hunting, the offering of *sakyou faat*—his teacher gives him a scarf and usually a ceremonial meal or drink, after which the pupil does whatever he has been taught in front of and for his teacher. When the teacher has given his pupil *loong* the boy is formally presented at the monastery with the ceremony of *di-tset*. This ceremony is a very small affair; the pupil and his teacher drink tea with two lamas and then the novice is presented with some *chi*, a scarf and a rupee in the name of the monastery. A novice so received is called *chapti-bu*. Even before this reception a pupil will often accompany his teacher or father to all ceremonies, making himself useful by helping in the fashioning of ceremonial objects, by holding the big metal instruments, and possibly by beating the gongs or drums.

793 Above *chapti-bu* there are six grades of lamas; to pass from one

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

grade to another demands firstly increasing knowledge and secondly validating feasts—*chaptok klon*. There must be an interval of at least three years between each rise in grade. It is expected that the expenses of the first two validating feasts will be borne by the young lama's family, the subsequent ones by himself. In the validating feasts for the higher grades everybody in the neighbourhood has to make fixed contributions. All the feasts are accompanied by prayers and readings from the scriptures.

The grade above *chapti-bu* is *tongpeun-bu*. These are the players of the musical instruments—the conch shells, the *galing* (a metal instrument between a clarionet and a trumpet), the long telescopic trumpet (*pak-doong*) and the flute made from a human femur (*kong-ling*). People learn how to play these instruments by watching experts; for the *galing* which has a reed mouthpiece and is capable of a variety of notes, the learner holds a grass between his teeth and copies the fingering of the player; he may also be privately taught by friends. To my Occidental ears all the music sounded like the cacophony of a zoo in a thunderstorm, but the lamas recognise and teach tunes, or, as they say, 'numbers.' The validating feast which demands a pig, two maunds of grain and four pounds of oil, only lasts one day. *Tongpeun-bu* cannot perform any offices on their own, and practically occupy the position of choristers.

Next in grade comes the *kané* whose one day feast calls for an ox, three maunds of grain and a maund of *chi*. The chief business of the *kané* is looking after the monastery and assisting the Dorjé Lapoon in their ceremonies; he also plays musical instruments. The *kané* are the only people who have to visit the monastery daily, to place the bowls of water on the altars at dawn, the *chimi* at sunset, and to burn incense. In the absence of superiors the *kané* is permitted to perform all offices of which he is capable; usually however his knowledge is slight and he has to ask his superiors for help; this help must be paid for with *chi*. The *kané* roughly corresponds to a deacon.

Kané and the ranks below barely qualify as lamas; they are in a way still students. Between the *kané* and the next grade *chéné* there is a very great gap. A *chéné* can perform all offices and in the absence of superiors can overlook monastery ceremonies; if he is old and experienced enough he can take pupils. The *chéné* is really a qualified priest. His validating feast is the most expensive of all: he has to give an ox, a pig, six maunds of grain, and ten maunds of *chi*. Each household has to contribute twenty pounds of *chi* and

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

793

eight pounds of grain. The feasting lasts for three days at the end of which period the *chéné* by himself constructs an elaborate altar and dos eworship.

After the *chéné* comes the *chithembu*. His one-day feast calls for a pig, two maunds of grain, and ten pounds of oil. Each household must contribute twenty pounds of *chi* and eight pounds of grain. The *chithembu* overlooks the good order of monastery gatherings and can take disciplinary action against quarrelsome, riotous or impious people; he also has the right to beat any lama, including his superiors, who may arrive late for a service or make mistakes in the reading. There is a special thonged stick called *pankar* which is kept for this purpose in the monastery. The *chithembu* are also meant to prevent the monastery or its precincts being used for improper purposes on the days when no services are held.

Only one man at a time can hold the office of *chithembu*. *Omzet*, the grade above *chithembu* demands considerable knowledge, and there are many not over ambitious or intelligent lamas who have risen to the grade of *chithembu* but are unable to go beyond. For these people, and for such as have not completed the six years since they were *chéné* there has been created the title of *chichembu*. *Chichembu* take their part in the monastery festivals; they are allowed to, but usually do not, perform ceremonies outside. The *chichembu* roughly resemble canons. No validating feast is required for assuming this title.

The validating feast for *omzet* lasts two or three days and calls for an ox, seven loads of *chi*, two loads of grain and 20 lbs. of oil. Each household must contribute 20 lbs. of *chi* and 16 lbs. of grain. The *omzet* and Dorjé Lapoon are the two highest ranks in the lamaist organisation, the Dorjé Lapoon being selected rather for their age than for any other qualification; they are the oldest and most respected of the learned lamas. The *omzet* is the instructor *par excellence*: he is in charge of all monastery ceremonies and is expected to be most learned and competent. The one-day validating feast of the Dorjé Lapoon only demands a pig, two maunds of grain, and ten pounds of butter; everybody else must contribute twenty pounds of *chi* and eight pounds of grain and must present the new Dorjé Lapoon with a scarf and a rupee. The Dorjé Lapoon do no organisational work beyond examining candidates before each rise in grade; they particularly go in for mystic practices and contemplation and they alone are capable of conducting the

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

dead man's soul on its journey through the other worlds after death. The Dorjé Lapoon are supposed to have renounced the things of this world; they are meant to be without property and to renounce such as they do possess; their nourishment is meant to be looked after by the other villagers; and, since they are meant to be fairly ascetic, it is expected that the Dorjé Lapoon will feast the other lamas yearly on their superfluity. Both *omzet* and Dorjé Lapoon can perform the mystic ceremony of *kong-so klon*: this ceremony, performed fasting in a dark room to make up for arrears of duties left undone and to appease the devils in the neighbourhood, is believed to be fraught with considerable danger which would result in the death of anybody not properly qualified who tried to perform it. The rank of *omzet* corresponds fairly closely to that of bishop; but as far as I know there is no equivalent in the Christian hierarchy to the rank of Dorjé Lapoon.

There are about twenty lamas attached to the monastery of Lingthem; eleven live permanently in the village, two others more or less permanently; the rest live in neighbouring villages. The two Dorjé Lapoon are the father of Datoop and the 'big father' of Tafoor; they are always addressed and referred to by their title. Tafoor and Ongden are *omzet*, Tafoor being by far the more learned; Datoop is *chichembu*, Lumba *chithembu*, Jiroong *chéné*, Chudo and Pembu *kané*, Chanko (Ongden's eldest son), Chano and Takal *chapti-bu*. All the *tongpeun-bu* live in the neighbouring villages. Chano and Takal are both full-grown men—Chano is thirty and Takal fifty-seven—but they are both too stupid to rise above the lowest rank. There are four boys studying to become lamas: they are Lumba's eldest son Kutt'r, aged eighteen, Tafoor's eldest son Chimpet, aged fourteen, Chano's eldest 'son' Mikmar, aged thirteen, and Chudo's eldest son aged four. The last named has not yet started to learn to read, but he is dressed in lama's clothes, and he plays on the floor at conducting services; this is considered to be a most auspicious omen, and when he does start studying he should learn quickly and easily.

Corresponding with the hierarchy of lamas there is a hierarchy of nuns (*in-é-bu*). Each rise in grade carries the same validating feast of a load of *chi*, 40 lbs. of grain and ten lbs. of oil or butter. The titles are similar, but they are completely pointless. Nuns cannot conduct ceremonies or perform exorcisms; in a very few of the lama's services, chiefly those connected with death, they have a subordinate role. There is no sort of compulsion or prophetic

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

792 horoscope which forces a woman to become a nun; the duties are undertaken through individual piety, though it would seem as though the influence of father or husband was preponderating; of the nine nuns in Lingthem six were the wives or daughters of lamas: the other three were the wives of laymen who came from distant villages and I did not find out the positions of their fathers. A nun can start to study at any time between marriage and old age, taking as a teacher either a lama or the Dorjé Lapoon or *omzet* nun. Literacy is not insisted on for nuns and by far the greater number are in fact illiterate; the worship of nuns consists in the turning of prayer-wheels and the chanting of *mantra*. From such information as I can obtain nuns play a very small rôle in other Sikkim monasteries; and I suspect that the organisation prevailing in Lingthem is a Lepcha elaboration designed to give equal opportunity to men and women, since the Lepchas have a tendency not to disqualify anybody from any pursuit on account of sex.

Owing to the personality of the holder one exception must be made to the generalisation that the nuns' grades are meaningless. Mrs. Datoop was *inébu chithembu* and she showed that she would be well able to wield the *pankar* if necessary. Men say that they would be ashamed to be beaten by a woman, but they would not be able to protest.

The nuns are meant to spend three days every month at the monastery, worshipping by circumambulating the monastery turning their hand prayer-wheels and chanting *Om! mani pudme hum!* and sitting in the *lha-gong* turning the big wheels to the accompaniment of the same chant. These visits take place on the 9th of the Tibetan month in honour of Chérézé, on the 14th in honour of Zobu Sangé Chumdendé, and on the 31st in honour of Guru Rimpuché. Little attention is paid to these festivals and often only two or three nuns turn up. Unlike the lamas, whose conduct is not so controlled, the nuns have to observe certain prohibitions; on the eve of a monastery visit they must not eat an evening meal nor copulate with their husbands; and on the day of the visit they must avoid eating meat and drinking *chi*. Most of the nuns, and all the more pious ones, were old women.

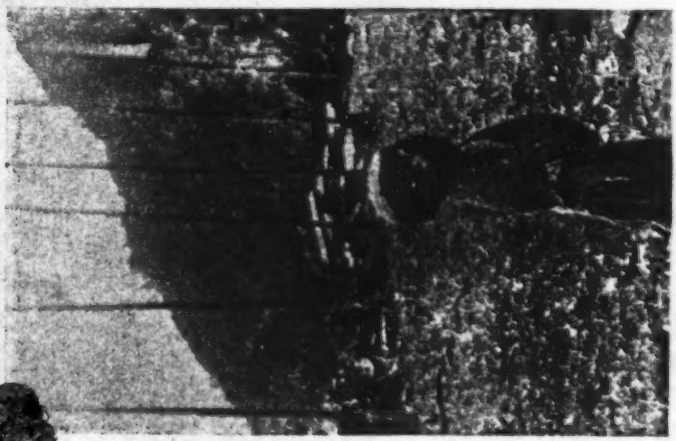
iv

793 The duties and devotions of lamas can be divided into three categories: personal and individual devotions, set monthly and

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5



Chimpet in lama's dress, with his hands joined in prayer; taken inside the monastery porch.



APPRENTICE LAMAS

The four-year old son of Chudo.

[341]
142
292
793

[facing p. 200]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

793 calendrical services, and ministering to the sick or threatened as individual necessity arises.

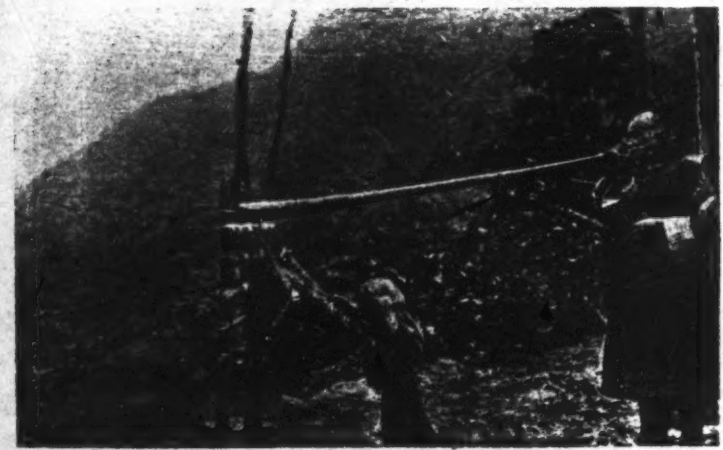
Lamas are meant to perform various private devotions when they wake in the night, early in the morning and in the evening. Tafoor and the second Dorjé Lapoon were aware of these duties, but I naturally have no evidence as to whether they or any other lamas did in fact perform these devotions. Also during the day 778 when a lama is alone and unoccupied he is meant to tell his beads, 788 repeating *mantra* hundreds and even thousands of times. Lamas 787 always wear a rosary of one hundred and eight beads with a couple of attached smaller objects; during ceremonies these rosaries are worn round the neck; during work they are often twisted round the wrists. They are used for devotion in exactly the same way as a Roman Catholic rosary, as a memento of the number of prayers which have been said. Rosaries are also used for divining; the rosary is thrown on to the ground and picked up at the place where it has fallen into a coil; the beads are counted from this place to one of the attachments by twos or threes; the presence or absence of a remainder gives the answer to the question divined. In the case of illness a twig is brought from the invalid to the diviner; the twig is placed on the ground and the diviner holds the rosary to his forehead, concentrating on the devil which he thinks may be disturbing the sufferer; the beads are then thrown on to the twig, and those between the bead touching the twig and one of the attachments counted; if the answer is negative the procedure will be repeated with the diviner concentrating on another devil. Rosary-divining is not confined to lamas; Mun and Padem also have divining rosaries but they are made somewhat differently, with red beads interspersed among the black and with different attachments; knowledgeable laymen also are able to divine by rosaries, if they have received *loong* from a qualified teacher. The rosary is considered in a way more personal than the other sacred implements—bell, skull-drum, sacred dagger, 'thunderbolt'—which the higher lamas have to possess and employ in different rituals; those of old lamas possess a certain talismanic virtue.

796 The lamas have to visit the monastery twice every Tibetan month; on the 10th. a festival is held in honour of Guru Rimpuché and on the 15th. in honour of Kinchenjunga. The feasts which accompany these festivals are meant to be given by a pair of householders in turn, so that from the villages of Lingthem and Panung each householder is responsible for half a communal feast every

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

793
534





LAMAS PLAY MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS IN THE MONASTERY COURTYARD

Above : The son of Lharibu Chujen and Tafoor play 'clarionets'.
Below : Kutt'r, Lumba's son, and Chudo play telescopic trumpets.

[facing p. 208]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

Lamaist horoscopes, like European ones, are automatic in their application, and, in the event of two or more people being born or dying in the same hour the horoscopes will be identical. The Lepchas thoroughly believe in the validity of the horoscopes and almost always carry out their instructions implicitly. It is believed that the defectives are abnormal because they or their parents neglected the indicated precautions.

It is only with the ceremonies prescribed by horoscopes that the possibility arises of a Lepcha failing to perform indicated ceremonies. Lamas come spontaneously to assist the soul of a dead man, and their presence, though usual, is not essential on any other occasion; in the case of present or threatened illness or danger the sufferer summons the lama to perform the requisite ceremonies; if for any reason he did not wish to perform the ceremonies he would not send for the priest.

On the whole the extent of employment of lamas by laymen depends on the personal inclination and beliefs of the layman in question. The greater number of lamaist ceremonies demand less expenditure than equivalent ones by Mun, since they do not involve the killing of animals. This generalisation must however be modified in one particular. Apart from jewels the only possible method of conspicuous expenditure for the ambitious is the erection of a lamaist altar in the *dé-ong* of his house and the purchase of the Boom or some other anthology of the lamaist scriptures. Once these are installed the visits of lamas at fairly constantly recurring intervals are essential for the reading of the scriptures and the performance of the necessary rites. Scriptures have to be read four times a year and since no layman can read, lamas have to be hired, feasts given to them and fees paid to them. This expense can only be stopped by selling or giving away the sacred books or objects.

Belief in horoscopes does not induce a feeling of fatalism, for every misfortune foretold carries with it its appropriate remedy. Unless a layman's child is predestined to become a lama people usually know nothing at all of their own first horoscopes, nor do parents usually remember for long the horoscope cast for their children. I never heard of an instance of an angry parent or elder sibling reproach a child because of the expense it had necessitated, nor throw in their face their unfavourable forecast. Even when people were trying to convince me of the validity of horoscopes they never quoted the realisation of past horoscopes, but only the

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

159 But even this proved useless; the Dorjé Lapoon was uncontrollable and without shame (for a lama should respect the wives of lamas of a lower grade than himself as though they were daughters-in-law) and so eventually Jiroong capitulated and gave his wife to the Dorjé Lapoon, who thereupon moved into his (Jiroong's) house. This transaction was completely irregular; Jiroong treated the Dorjé Lapoon as if he were his younger brother. After he had given up his wife and home to the Dorjé Lapoon Jiroong travelled around for some years, returning home from time to time; during his absence the two old people worked the fields. When Jiroong married his second wife (Tempa's sister) the two of them shared house with the Dorjé Lapoon and the Omzet nun. In 1934 the house burned down; the two couples then separated; Jiroong and his family continued living in the burned house while the Dorjé Lapoon and his wife went to live in a field-house a little higher up the mountain.

Six months after this move the Omzet nun died, and Atyok's son came to look after his aged father. This aged father was in 1937 trying to arrange a betrothal with the widowed younger sister of his fourth wife Atyok; but she refused to accept, considering that a man forty years older than herself would scarcely make an adequate husband.

159 193 The validating feasts by which the Dorjé Lapoon attained his high rank among the lamas were paid for by Datoop. Dorjé Lapoon, Chudo said, are appointed for their age and for their learning; the suggestion is that they have taught the lower lamas who will therefore honour them as teachers. Their moral character is [212] not regarded. The first Dorjé Lapoon is the only man in the district who possesses or can read a Lepcha manuscript; the book he owns is a translation of the Tibetan scripture Guru Chong Numtar.

159 [848] Datoop surprised me one day by announcing quite spontaneously that his father was a bastard—a word with very considerable shameful connotations. He said that he was half Sikkimese, as his mother had betrayed his absent father with a wandering Sikkimese monk. He was however treated as legitimate and is a member of his mother's husband's *ptso*.

Datoop.

Datoop has few memories of his early childhood. He can recall being beaten by his parents, but not being carried. After his

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

I suspect that geologists would find this explanation unacceptable: but in Lingtem there are no geologists; and as for me, I prefer the Lepcha story. It is a good example of their way of thinking and will serve as an introduction to what is to follow.

We reached Lingtem in an hour from the pass and found the headman waiting for us with a gift of eggs and milk. He told us we might live in the monastery itself; but this had the disadvantage that one might not smoke inside the building. Eventually, however, the Mandal said it would be all right providing there was no smoking in the actual rooms where the images are kept; so we decided to move in straight away.

For want of a better word in the English language the Lamaist *gompa* is generally described as a monastery, though such places can in no way be compared with the religious institutions known by that name in Europe. The inmates of *gompas* are sometimes celibates (but seldom so in Sikkim) and most monasteries own property: but apart from this there is, as Mme David-Neel, the eminent Tibetan scholar and traveller, has pointed out, hardly anything in common between the Christian and the Lamaist religious orders.

The Lingtem monastery is about sixty feet square and has two storeys. In appearance it is almost identical with the ordinary Lepcha house, except for its greater size, and the broad band of red ochre round its walls, which denotes that it is a sacred building. The lower floor contains the main hall, which is used regularly for services. Here there is a big altar containing many gilded images, with a specially fine one of Guru Rimpoche (Padma Sambhava, who first introduced Buddhism into Tibet) in the centre. In front of the images there are always seven small bowls of water, in order that the gods may wash and drink. These are emptied at dusk and refilled again at dawn. When the water is taken away it is replaced by one or more tiny wicks, floating in either butter or oil, which give a faint glimmer like a night-light. On special occasions there will be dozens of these

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

special Lama would come and meditate alone in this completely darkened room. He would sometimes intone for hours at a stretch, accompanying his prayers on the cymbals and drum. After several hours of this rhythmical banging one's nerves would come near to breaking point. The only thing then was to go for a solitary walk. This particular form of devotion is known as *Kongso Klong*, or the "sending away of Devils," and this was the name we eventually gave to its chief exponent. I later discovered that our presence in the monastery was thought to call for redoubled efforts in this direction, but I was not prepared for what happened on the day of my final departure. On this occasion Kongso Klong appeared before me with the usual present of eggs. I thought he had merely come to say good-bye, and was somewhat astonished when the others told me that he demanded ten rupees "for services rendered." This I paid.

Between the Kongso room and our bedroom was a short passage, which contained a large open fire-place for cooking. This was identical with that in the ordinary living house, but during our time it was never used. For dining-room we had a tent. This was pitched outside the small house adjoining the monastery, which served both as kitchen and living quarters for our servants. It was normally occupied by Pong Ring, a snuffling old gentleman and almost blind. He was a sort of verger and was supposed to keep the monastery clean and to tend its tiny garden. All this, however, was far beyond him and he seldom appeared. Sometimes on sunny days he would drag himself painfully down and would totter senilely round the building, at the same time turning his prayer-wheel and wheezing like a pug. When he felt up to it he would take a turn at the giant drums and his accompanying prayers sounded to me like the swarming of bees. Everyone treated him kindly; but the poor old man had outlived his time. He said he had once had a wife, but never a child to look after him in his extreme old age. Sometimes, when we were talking to others, he would pause in his circumambulations and stare

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

consideration and its neglect would not cause any immediate retribution; but a failure to propitiate the actual spirits might be fraught with all sorts of evil consequences and no one would willingly omit to carry it out.

It is not possible for an ordinary man to have direct dealings with the spirit world, nor indeed would he normally know the cause of his particular trouble. The cause of certain common ills, such for instance as coughs and colds, boils or fever, are, of course, well known to most people, but not the special knowledge required to make the necessary sacrifices to the particular demon which has caused them. For this it is necessary to have recourse to a proper practitioner, either a *Mun* or a *Yukman*, which is the word used by Lepchas to denote a Lama. It seems certain that prior to the introduction of Buddhism into Sikkim such sacerdotal functions as were required by the Lepchas were carried out by Muns. Their services are still much in demand in Lingtem, where they work in close conjunction with the Lamas. In other parts of Sikkim, however, their numbers are steadily decreasing, and the tendency is for all priestly functions to be carried out only by Lamas. In the Kalimpong district (in British India) there are still large colonies of Lepchas, and amongst these people Muns have almost ceased to exist. Such as there are practise almost secretly, for their presence is not welcome to orthodox Lamas.

"A notable feature of Lamaism throughout all its sects," notes Waddell, "and decidedly un-Buddhistic, is that the Lama is a priest rather than a monk. He assigns himself an indispensable place in the religion and has coined the current saying, 'Without a Lama in front there is no (approach to) God.' He performs sacerdotal functions on every possible occasion, and a large proportion of the order is almost entirely engaged in this work. And such services are in much demand, for the people are in hopeless bondage to the demons, and not altogether unwilling slaves to their exacting worship."

The Lamas of Sikkim belong to the *Nin-Ma-pa* or

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

unreformed sects. These are the so-called "red hat" Lamas, as opposed to the reformed "yellow-hat" or *Ge-lug-pa*, which form the established Church of Tibet proper. The Nin-ma-pa is more freely tinged than any other with pre-Buddhist practices and its Lamas are required neither to remain celibate nor to practise abstinence. "It regards the metaphysical Buddha Samantabhadra as its primordial deity or Adi-Buddha. Its mystic insight is Mohautpanna or the "great ultimate perfection." Its tutelaries are "The fearful Vajra and Dub-pa-koh-gye." Its guardian demon is "The Lord *Gur*. It worships the Guru Padma-sambhava, the founder of Lamaism, in a variety of forms, both divine and demoniacal, expressive of his different moods at different times, and also his favourite Kashmiri teacher, Sri Sinha, and the Indian teacher of the latter, Gah-rab-Dorje, who derived his inspiration from the celestial Buddha, Vajra-satwa, who in turn was inspired by the primordial deity, Samantabhadra-Buddha."

There are, of course, in Sikkim many learned Lamas who would find no difficulty in expounding the canon of their Church. The Abbot of Lachen, for instance, which is only a long day's march from Lingtem, is a man of quite remarkable intelligence and learning. Among others Mme. David-Neel, the famous French Tibetan scholar and traveller, has paid tribute to his exceptional ability as a teacher, as has my friend Marco Pallis, who also studied with him for a time. But men such as he are rareties in any community; and as for the Lamas in Lingtem I doubt if they could even name the sect to which they belong. But in Lingtem, and in fact all over the Jongu district, the Church is nothing more than a spare-time occupation. There are about eighteen Lamas attached to the Lingtem Monastery and all of these are engaged in the normal occupation of an ordinary Lepcha villager. They attend at the monastery for periodical ceremonies, usually twice each month, but their chief function consists in conducting private services in connection with illness, crops, house-building, and so on, for

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

individual members of the community. Unlike Tibet, where animal sacrifice is practically unknown, many of these ceremonies, particularly those in connection with illness and other manifestations of devils, require the sacrifice of an ox or goat, and on such occasions the Lama is assisted by a Mun; for although the Lama has no objection to assisting at such a very un-Buddha-like ceremony he draws the line at actually taking life himself. He is a physician more than a priest, for he deals with the ills of the physical body rather than with those of the soul. Sometimes he is unable himself to diagnose the cause of trouble, and on such occasions he may call in a *Nunjimu*, a person who by dancing herself into a trance is able to ascertain the cause of the trouble, but not to cure it, this being the Lama's own province. The Lama does not, I think, claim for himself any supernatural power. He is merely "one who knows," as the Lepcha word *Yukman* implies, as opposed to the "ignorant one," or ordinary layman. The whole of his teaching is based upon cause and effect; and once a cause has been ascertained its treatment is merely the carrying out of a definite specified ceremony. This conception of course is quite in accordance with the best medical tradition; but it is more open to doubt whether Harley Street would approve of such treatment as, for instance, the sacrifice of a bullock, coupled with a thousand repetitions of the mystic formula "*Om mani padme hum*," as a cure for general debility. If a man calls in one Lama rather than another it is not because he has necessarily more faith in his powers, or thinks he has a better bedside manner, but because he knows more ceremonies: X may have studied only as far as the cure of the common cold; but Y may know how to ensure that your wife's next child is a boy. Either of these treatments would doubtless find favour in Europe; but in the meantime I cannot honestly recommend a pilgrimage to Lingtem for the purpose!

A boy does not usually become a Lama because he feels it is his right vocation but because his horoscope, prepared at birth, decrees it. Every child is born with certain signs, from

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

793 the characteristics of which no escape is possible. The "head
787 sign" denotes that a child should become a Lama and when this is found the boy is always sent to a teacher. He may later decide that he does not wish to practise and in this case will cease to study. There is no objection to children without the "head sign" becoming Lamas; but if, for instance, a boy born with the "hand sign" wishes to enter the Church nothing can prevent him from eventually turning into a thief. If a girl is born with the "heart sign" it means she should become a female Lama; and it may be noted in passing that in both sexes the "genital sign" is thought to be a sure indication of future sexual promiscuity. These so-called "signs" are not actually visible on the body; they are merely the attributes attaching to birth at a particular time, and failure to comply with the conditions indicated is thought to result in a shortening of life. I think, however, that Lepchas do not attach much importance to them, and in actual practice the son of a Lama, whatever his "sign," will nearly always study for at least a few years.

793 It is said that when a child reaches the age of three or four it will try on its own to study. I personally never saw any such infant prodigies; and such small boys in Lingtem as were destined for the Church seemed much more interested in catapulting birds or playing around in the fields. The
[292] only difference between them and other children was in the yellow sash worn round their waists, the distinguishing mark, apart from close-cropped hair, of Lepcha Lamas, who in Lingtem do not ordinarily wear monastic robes but dress as laymen. When the novice is about eight or nine his parents
[43] select some experienced Lama as his teacher, and to him they send the boy with a present. This usually takes the form of a pig's carcass and a few rupees. A father never teaches his own son, except incidentally, but the teacher will nearly always be some man of the boy's own village. The novice generally lives with his teacher and receives instruction only at night, since both must spend the daylight hours working in the fields. Sometimes a boy will run away from his

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

793 teacher and when this happens his father will beat him and send him back. A boy must study for three years before he can call himself a Yukman: but he is really no more than a probationer for several years to come. There is no examination at the end of the novitiate, but the pupil must be pronounced as fit by his master before proceeding further. Before a Yukman can be advanced in rank he must be passed as fit by the head of his monastery. This, however, is a mere matter of form and dependent entirely upon giving the necessary feasts. The position is almost exactly the same as that of the Oxford or Cambridge B.A., who has merely to pay a fee in order to become a Master of Arts: but in Lingtem the candidate is not required to pay in cash; he merely entertains the Senate to a feast of pork and drink.

As soon as a boy has finished his three years' course of study he is presented to the local monastery by two Lamas, for [431] whom he provides food and drink. In return they give him a ceremonial scarf and a present of one rupee. There is no actual ceremony, but this exchange of gifts constitutes the novice's graduation as a *Chap-dibu*, the lowest rank of Lama. He has no priestly functions and is little more than a servant to the other Lamas during such times as they are present at the monastery, seeing that their drinking cups are kept replenished, sweeping out the building and performing other such menial tasks. A *Chap-dibu* must remain about three years in this and each subsequent rank before he can be advanced, the next stage being known as *Tong-pön-bu*. To attain this rank the Lama must provide a feast of one pig, [273] eighty pounds of specially prepared dry millet for making *Chi*, the universal drink of Sikkim, and eighty pounds each of rice and parched rice. A *Tong-pön-bu* is not permitted to read from books during monastic ceremonies, but he may now [534] play on conch shells. He may also blow the funnel-shaped hautboy called *Galing*, also the long ten-foot trumpets, *Rukdung*, and the flutes, made from human thigh-bones known as *Kongling*. When playing on the conch shell he may, if he wishes, wear a special red cap called *Tongyo*. Should the

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

young Lama not already know how to play these instruments he is particularly enjoined to practise assiduously; and I can personally testify that he does so!

The next stage is known as *Ka-Ne*, and to attain this a feast similar to the last must again be given. A Ka-Ne also plays on musical instruments and in addition he is permitted to offer lamps to the monastery idols, and to change the ceremonial bowls of water every morning and evening. He also assists in making the ceremonial cones of dough known as *Tormo;* but still he takes no part in the reading of books. To attain the next rank, known as *Che-ne*, a much bigger feast is necessary. This time an ox, sufficient millet to make forty maunds of Chi, and three maunds of rice are necessary. The initiation ceremony, which seems to consist mostly in eating and drinking, lasts for three days and nights. The Lama will himself usually attempt to cultivate the necessary millet from which the *Chi* is made, but in view of the enormous quantity necessary the whole village will generally lend a hand in providing it. Most of the village is present during the ceremony; and in addition to the food and drink provided by the Lama himself each household provides eight pounds of parched rice and a certain amount of *Chi*. During the festivities the newly appointed Che-Ne will prepare the ceremonial altar, together with its concomitant *Tormas*. He is now qualified to take part in all ceremonies, but as Che-Ne his special duties are to be responsible for the ritually correct performance of all monastic services. His function is somewhat similar to that of the Esquire Bedells at Cambridge. He may now perform ceremonies outside the monastery for private individuals, and if of sufficient age may even be entrusted with the teaching of young novices.

The next stage, known as *Chötembu*, requires another big feast, but the festivities for this last for one day only. In addition to the food and drink the newly promoted Lama is also required to provide ten pounds either of oil or butter for burning in the ceremonial lamps. There is only one Chötembu in each monastery, and he is in charge of all disciplinary

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

793 matters. He is permitted to beat other Lamas, and also laymen who are slack in the performance of their duties, not excluding even the Dorje-Lopön, or head of the monastery. It may be noted, however, that he has no authority to beat people once they have left the monastery or its grounds.

The next rank is known as *Umzet*. This, too, necessitates a big feast, which is generally attended by the whole village and lasts from two to three days. An Umzet teaches but has no authority to beat people. He is really under-study to the head of the monastery, and is usually not advanced to this rank unless it is considered that he is capable eventually of succeeding his master.

Dorje-Lopön is the highest rank of all, and there is usually one at the head of every monastery, though in Lingtem there are two. In addition to the usual feast each Lama and every householder in the village presents a woven scarf to the Dorje-Lopön. He is not required to keep all these scarves and generally sells them again at half their usual price. Thus, people who do not bring one with them to the ceremony may buy one from the Dorje-Lopön himself and re-present it, so that the offering really turns into a kind of cash transaction. There is no limit to the number of each rank of Lama in any particular monastery, and in practice the senior Dorje-Lopön, should there be more than one, is the titular head, the actual power being usually in the hands of some more active member of the community, more often than not the Umzet, as was the case in Lingtem. For the performance of actual [242] ceremonies most of the Lamas wear the usual maroon robe as worn by Lamas in Tibet. Unlike that country, however, there are here no differences in dress by which a Lama's rank may be recognised.

In addition to the Lamas there are also in Lingtem a number of nuns, or *Inebu*, as they are called. In Tibet, while female Lamas are given a very inferior position, scarcely higher than lay devotees, they are required to practise chastity, and usually live an ascetic life in remote and lonely convents. There is one such place at Tatsang, on the road to

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

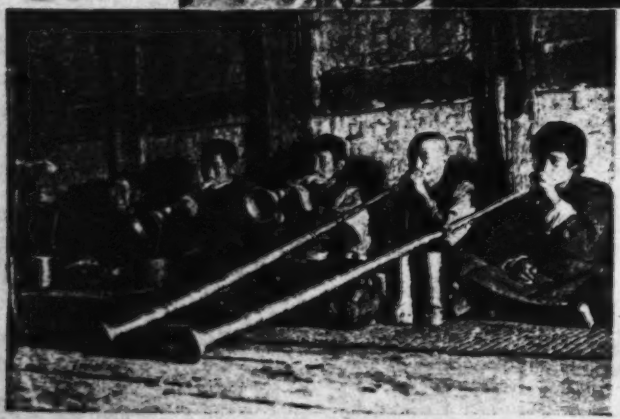
793
534



Lamaist music.



Lamaist music.



Lamaist music.

[Facing p. 76]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

793
346



Inebus performing their ceremony of circumambulating the monastery.

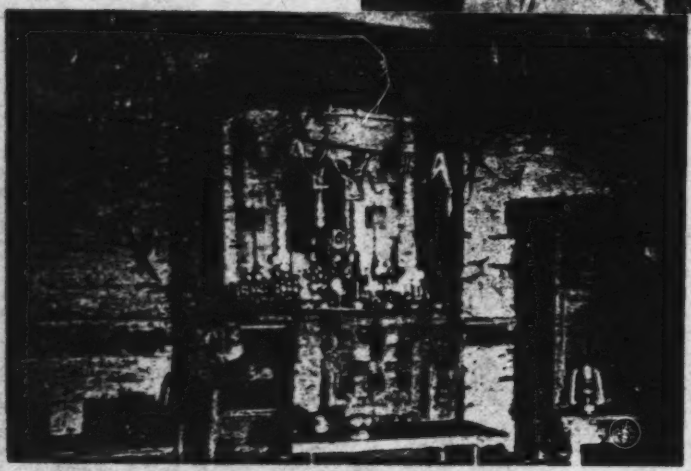
142
291

Hlatam, the alleged poisoner.



Domestic altar in the private house of a Lama. Note the reserve store of maize hanging from the rafters on the left; and on the right a hurricane lantern, one of the treasures of the house.

778
251
373



[facing p. 77]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

Everest, which has been several times visited on the way to the mountain. The nuns were indescribably dirty, and their faces caked with soot. They were dressed in maroon, in robes similar to those worn by Lamas. Their heads were completely shaved; but to protect them against the cold, which was severe at nearly all times of the year, they wore huge yak's-hair wigs, shaped like the hats worn by Chinese mandarins, which gave them an almost grotesque appearance. The first time we visited the place, in 1922, the nuns turned out in force to inspect us, but they were far too shy to converse, even through our Tibetan interpreter, and contented themselves with a giggle. Most, if not all, of them were, so far as I remember, completely illiterate.

"Nuns are admitted to a few monasteries in Sikkim," notes Waddell, "but their number is extremely small, and individually they are illiterate." I doubt whether the Inebus of Lingtem could properly be classed as nuns at all. Most of them have had no real training and not one of them can read or write. They do not perform ceremonies for private individuals; nor are they given a place inside the main hall at monastic services, being regarded as scarcely different from ordinary women. Their devotions are confined almost entirely to the turning of prayer-wheels and drums, circumambulation of the monastery building, and telling their beads. The small Hla-gong, which houses the three big prayer-drums, is really their private chapel, and to this they have access at all times. They usually came to the monastery thrice each month, spent a few hours turning the drums, while they sang in unison, and then went away again. Whenever their visit coincided with some ceremony performed by the men we noticed that the attendance was markedly greater.

Most Inebus wear a rosary round their necks or carry it twined around the wrist. There is no other mark by which they may be recognised. I told one old woman that in Tibet I had noticed that nuns were always shaven, and asked her why the same custom was not adopted here, since the Lamas

793 834 conformed to the Tibetan rule. But she only laughed, and would not tell me the reason. When I got to know her well she told me: "Once a woman's head is shaved," she said, "it is no longer permissible to sleep with a man."

302 576 793 Lepcha women usually wear their hair in a divided plait, which they coil in a circle round the head. It is a mark of respect to wear the hair down loose, and for this reason the plaits are uncoiled when Inebus come to the monastery. The same rule applies to men, who will likewise undo their queues as a mark of great respect. I seldom saw anyone do this at the monastery, but was told that a man would wear his hair loose in the presence of the Maharaja, for instance, if he wished to show the utmost respect.

793 The wife of a Lama does not necessarily become an Inebu. It is entirely a matter of personal desire: nor is it necessary to start as a child. Many women do not make the decision until well after marriage. It is said that a certain amount of instruction is given; but in view of their duties, which could well be performed by a blind deaf-mute, I do not think this can amount to much. They do, of course, commit a few prayers to memory, and it is said that their training takes from ten to fifteen years. Since they are still illiterate at the end of it, this I can well believe. Datoop's wife, who is easily the most intelligent of the local Inebus, told me that the selected teacher will usually be a Lama, but may, if desired, be some other woman. The pupil visits her teacher generally twice a day and works in the fields in between. If the teacher lives far away she will go only once a day, or even once a week, in which case the teacher will give her homework to prepare. It is not quite clear, nor was my informant able to explain, how this was done by a person who could neither read nor write. Sometimes a Lama will teach his own wife, and such Lingtem Inebus as are the wives of Lamas have all been instructed by their own husbands. Inebus have the same ranks as Lamas, but their duties do not vary, nor does there appear to be any arrangement or ceremony by which a woman may be advanced in rank.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

When she has spent some years in any one rank she seems to take unto herself the next. Even the so-called Inebu Dorje-Lopön appears to have no authority over the others and, like them, her devotions are confined to the turning of wheels.

Inebus come to the monastery three times every month: on the eighth, fifteenth, and thirty-first (the day of full moon), according to the Tibetan calendar, which is in general use in this part of the world. On the nights preceding these three days the Inebu may not sleep with her husband, nor is she permitted to eat any meat. Of the ten Inebu in Lingtem six claim to be able to read; but in actual practice this does not amount to more than the ability to recognise the characters of the phrase *Om mani padme hum* when they are seen on a flag or cut in stone. The letters forming this sentence are so familiar that even quite small children are able to recognise them: the situation is almost exactly the same as the European child who soon learns to identify the cat in its first picture-book. This, however, is very far from the ability to read; but it is the stage beyond which most Inebu seem never to progress.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

some of the Lamas were in the habit of spending occasional days fasting in the building. Amongst these was the Dorje-Lopön; and so it was that the two became acquainted. After a time they got to know each other better, and it seems that they were in the habit of telling their beads together in the *Hla-gong*. Ordinarily this conduct would have passed unnoticed; but in these particular circumstances it was most reprehensible in view of the fact that Jiroong had been the pupil of the Dorje-Lopön, who was thus his senior in rank. The Dorje-Lopön, however, had by now decided that life in Lingtem was too good a thing to be missed; and so it was that he decided not to return to his other two wives. Jiroong knew perfectly well what was going on; and while he did not care particularly for his wife, he could take no action, since to complain of his senior's conduct would have been an offence against ecclesiastic discipline. Things went on in this rather unsatisfactory manner for several months, when the Dorje-Lopön thought his position sufficiently stabilised for him to visit Jiroong's wife in her own home; but this was rather more than the village would stand. Attempts were now made to induce the Dorje-Lopön to return to his two former wives; but without success. All this happened about seventeen years ago, when the Dorje-Lopön must have been about sixty-five years old. A meeting was now called of all the local Lamas, headmen, and Youmis. They considered the case and decided that the Dorje-Lopön must go back to his former wives. This he flatly refused to do, and went so far as to say that they could kill him before he would consent to leave Lingtem. A compromise was therefore arrived at by which it was decided that the Dorje-Lopön should allow his two former wives to come and live with him in Lingtem, which they did. By this time his son by his first wife was already married and had four children of his own. Chapshay and Atyok, wives two and three, now came over to Lingtem and took up residence with Datoop, with whom the Dorje-Lopön, his father, was then living, having promised to see no more of Jiroong's wife. It looked as though the affair had been

793
142
154



The second Dorje Lopön.



The senior Dorje Lopön.

[facing p. 84]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

possesses is revealed to him in dreams. Although there were several Padim in Lingtem no one seemed to employ them, preferring always to call in a Mun. The difference between the two seems to be similar to that between a chemist, for instance, and a doctor, the Mun, of course, representing the latter.

There is, so far as I know, no ceremony which Mun perform in Lingtem that in a more orthodox Lamaist society could not be performed equally well by Lamas: and while the latter have usurped many of the Mun's functions, at the present time the two work side by side in perfect amity, perhaps because of the equable Lepcha temperament. There is not the slightest rivalry between them, and when a Lama is called in to advise he will often recommend some ceremony for which a Mun is necessary.

A man does not become a Mun or Padim by inclination, but because of an irresistible compulsion manifested through some illness. Most of those with whom we talked, although they liked the presents that their patients brought them, would have preferred to be like ordinary men. There is only a certain number in every clan; and when one dies the talent passes on. Thus, although it is possible for a mother and son both to be Mun the talent is not hereditary; nor is it necessary for a man to be a Padim before becoming a Mun, although this sometimes happens.

Gongyop, the most popular Mun in Lingtem, became one only five years ago. He is at present forty-eight, and was a Padim for twenty years before he became a Mun. When he was in his early twenties he was taken very ill; and was weak and listless for a long time. The cause of his illness was eventually diagnosed, and it was seen that only by becoming a Padim could he recover his health. He could eat no rice, nor could he drink *chi;* and his limbs felt as though they had been tied up, and he could not walk. He remained in this state for nearly two years. However, as soon as the cause of his trouble was discovered he rapidly recovered. He became a Padim by the mere performance of the necessary ceremony;

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

in Lepcha society through intermarriage with Nepalis. [756]

Before leaving the subjects of illness and sorcery it will be convenient to describe the Lepcha Lama in his function as healer. I have already noted that this is his principal employment, but he also takes part, of course, in the services of general worship held at the monastery from time to time. In Tibet the two functions are not generally combined: a Lama is either a sorcerer or a priest, but never both. There is of course a close connection between the two and they often work in conjunction. In Sikkim, however, this differentiation is not recognised, at least not amongst the Lingtem Lamas, and the two distinct and really quite separate functions are here combined. [793] [755]

During our stay in Lingtem we had frequent opportunities of seeing Tafoor at work. It would be of no interest to give the details of every ceremony we attended, for except in minor details they did not greatly differ. I propose, therefore, to describe only one such occasion; and since it is a fair sample of them all, to tell the story in some detail.

I have already mentioned that Pichi, the son of Datoop, had spent some years in Gangtok learning to be a carpenter. He finished his course and had returned to Lingtem in March. He looked thoroughly ill; anæmic and emaciated, he appeared to be wasting away. He was unable either to eat or work, and could only drag himself about with difficulty. Datoop brought him one day to see us, when he complained of pain in the heart and side. He asked if we could give him medicine, but there was nothing we could do beyond recommending him to go into Gangtok for treatment. This was shortly after our arrival; and since there were at the time many new things to see and do we thought no more about him.

Pichi, however, got steadily worse, when his father then called in Tafoor. Datoop is himself a Lama, but it would [576] have been a breach of professional etiquette for him to prescribe for any member of his own household.

We went to the house about half-past five and found that an

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

ox had been already slaughtered. A number of people were drinking in the kitchen and in the altar-room next door Tafoor and another Lama were chanting, accompanying themselves with cymbals and drums. The altar was filled with *tormas* of every size and description, some of them embellished with stylised floral designs in coloured butter.* In front of the group of *tormas* was a row of lamps, about a dozen in number. These had already been lighted and formed the sole illumination of the room. On the ground in front of the Lamas was an object known as *Nak-po-Gosum*, "the black (magical) three-headed one." This was a very elaborate figure of a three-headed hermaphrodite adorned with what looked like bits of stick, brambles and feathers. At the time there was no opportunity to examine it carefully in the semi-darkened room, but since it appeared to be of unusual interest I later got Tafoor to come and make one for me, and its details are given below. The figure itself was about one foot high, but its genitalia, which were prominently displayed, were life-sized. The male organ was shown protruding from the female, with the pudenda hanging below. Some of the blood of the slaughtered ox had been sprinkled over the figure, parts of which had been previously coloured.

While the Lamas continued their chanting the patient remained in the kitchen, where the Mun Gongyop was doing some ceremony, with the head and legs of the ox laid out in front of him. It seemed to consist in the constant repetition of the names of various gods and demons. As soon as this was

* The *torma*, or "holy food," which is used in every Lamaist ceremony, is "a high, conical cake of dough, butter and sugar, variously coloured." In Lingtem they were usually made of plain millet paste. Mrs. de Beauvoir Stocks states that the Lepchas "exhibit *tormas* as phallic offerings." I have never come across this suggestion before and believe it to be quite unfounded. I was told in Tibet that the *torma* was originally made in the form of an image of the god to which it was intended as an offering. As ritual became more complicated so the numbers of *tormas* required increased in number (some ceremonies require several hundred), and in this way, perhaps as some form of labour-saving device, the original figure became stylised into its present conical form. But in any case the Lepcha has no use for symbolism. When he wishes to suggest the human genitalia he represents it as it is: it would never occur to him to do otherwise.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

finished all present went into the altar-room and prostrated themselves several times before the altar. The children, however, omitted this mark of respect. In one corner were two small girls aged about ten and twelve. They were lying on the floor with their knees drawn up, when the mother of the elder, catching sight of her daughter, told her not to display her vulva. This was apparently a quite ordinary remark, for nobody took any notice.

All this time the two Lamas continued to chant, while still playing their cymbals and drum. While this was going on Karma came in and placed a small bag filled with grain round the central neck of the *Go-sum;* he was very drunk at the time. The chanting and playing still continued, and now the *Go-sum* was turned completely round: it now had its back towards the altar. Pichi's mother pulled a few threads out of his coat and dropped them on to the figure. Now Karma took a handful of powdered maize and scattered it on the floor, in the form of a line leading towards the door. This was the road by which the evil spirit, having been expelled from Pichi's body, would finally leave the house. No one might cross this path; and if one wished to get from one side of the room to the other it was necessary to go round and behind the figure, thus avoiding the path. Several men, Karma among them, now lifted the *Go-sum* up and carried it out of the house, carefully following the line of powdered maize. The figure was taken to a spot about four hundred yards away, which had been previously indicated by the Lamas, a boy going in front with a lighted brand to show the way. It was there abandoned and would be eaten by dogs during the night. When it is found that an offering of this sort is not consumed it means that the demons have not accepted it, and that the patient will get no relief from that particular sacrifice.

Singing and drinking were continued throughout the night, but we left as soon as the ceremony was over.

We did not see Pichi for nearly a month, and by then he had completely recovered. He was fat and well, and had a

751 If she lives until after November she will in
755 future be lucky, especially should she engage in any form of
[777] trade. She will always have plenty to eat and drink and her later life will be "like a flower." It is clear, however, that some childless woman is covetous of her mother. At the present time she is listless; always in a hurry, and seems perhaps to pay no attention to her parents. This is because a demon has taken charge of her soul.

It is possible that the child may dream of corpses: also she may excrete and vomit blood, in which case she may have no desire for food. This, however, will be averted provided the treatment is carefully followed. The child will in any case suffer from coughs and colds during the next few months; but for this nothing can be done. They will not be dangerous.

793 Tafoor's fee for the consultation, at which the patient was
[466] not present, amounted to two rupees. The ceremonies, however, were much more expensive, but had not been completed by the time I left Lingtem.

793 We have already seen that in Sikkim the Lama functions
754 both as priest and doctor; but there is another side to his activities which may definitely be classified as magic or sorcery. This part of his work may best be considered under three separate headings: the causing of death, and sending of devils to cause harm; love magic; and finally, charms and spells.

754 The ability to cause the death of others is not apparently confined to Lamas and is occasionally carried out by laymen. The outward and visible sign of the ceremony consists in burning butter and incense over which copper has been scraped. A chicken must also be sacrificed and its blood offered to the demons. It is believed that by this means the selected demon gets a full stomach and will then do what is asked of it. It seemed so easy and simple a rite that I asked Tafoor if I could not do it myself; but "No," he said; "you have not been long in this country and the Mungs do not yet know who you are!"

Tafoor says that he has personally never sent a demon to

756
755
301
142
291
415



The Mun Gongyop making an offering. He is assisted by his wife, who squats on the right. The object in the saucepan is a bamboo strainer, out of which she is ladling *chi* to refill the cup which Gongyop is holding.

793
755
212
142
291

Tafoor "prescribing" for Chano's wife. Chano, on the left, appears to be somewhat doubtful of the issue; or perhaps he is wondering whether he can afford the necessary "treatment."



778
249



A *Mung-Li*, or demon's house, on the edge of a cardamom field.

[FACING p. 146]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

754trouble others, although of course he knows how to do it. The second Dorje Lopön, however, has often sent them; and by this means has actually caused the death of two people. On the first occasion he was still a pupil when a man came to his master and begged him to use his power to kill a certain person. The teacher thought it a good opportunity to see how his pupil progressed; he told him to have a shot at it, and see what happened. He did so; and in due course the man died. On the second occasion the Dorje Lopön had his knife stolen during some ceremony at the Monastery. He was very angry, but did not know who was the culprit. However, he sent a Mung to kill him; and when a man died shortly afterwards it was naturally believed that he was the thief.

Tafoor has himself learnt how to kill people; but "The State," so he says, "no longer permits the sending of devils for the purpose of causing people's death!" At the present time, in addition to himself, the two Dorje Lopöns are the only people in Lingtem who have the necessary skill. It is said that the first is still willing to exercise his powers on the quiet; but the second Dorje Lopön no longer does this [782] sort of thing: he went on a pilgrimage to Nepal some years ago and took an oath never in future to do it.

832 When a Lama is practising love magic on his own behalf ● 793 it is only necessary for him to take a rosary in his hand and concentrate on the girl whose love he covets, as a result of which she will be unable to resist his advances. Should his power of concentration, however, be insufficient to produce the desired result, he has only to take a small stone or a lump of dirt, spit upon it and throw it at the girl. This is never known to fail.

When acting on behalf of others the Lama must be given a small piece of hair of each of the man and woman concerned. He twines these two pieces together and then concentrates on the couple, the hair being thrown away later without ceremony. This service costs one rupee; but a friendly Lama will often do it for nothing.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

[713] Tafoor does not himself stoop to the practice of love magic, 756 and I gather that it is considered beneath the dignity of any 932 Lama of position. It is much more commonly done by a Mun; and in this case the procedure is slightly different. A small portion of the hair of both the parties is again necessary. The Mun twists the pieces together, puts them into a clean plate in front of him, and concentrates and chants throughout one whole night. This is known as *Nangyong Hyok*. It is possible to have the ceremony done in order to seduce some other person's wife or husband, but is generally only resorted to when an already married couple do not get on well together. It is not unknown for parents to have the ceremony done on behalf of children when they marry; and especially is this the case in a *mariage de convenance*. Should a mistake be made, and the wrong hair given, nothing can be done to prevent or nullify the effect: the two people concerned will be bound to fall in love. I have often wondered what would happen should the hair of two men be mixed.

171 Love magic does not appear to be commonly practised in Tibet, for none of the books on Lamaism makes any mention of it. It is, however, very popular with most Hindus, particularly Brahmans, who are frequently in the habit of taking wives young enough to be their daughters. It is popular in all parts of Nepal, where Brahman influence is strong, and has, I imagine, been incorporated into Sikkim Lamaism through contact with the people of that country.

751 Amulets are called *Sung-Bo* or *Ka-Wo*, and are of many 777 different kinds. Some of these are Tibetan, others come from Nepal or Bhutan, but all are in common use by Lepchas.

Tse-Sung are amulets for prolonging life and warding off the dangers which threaten it, while *Rim-Sung* are worn only in times of epidemics. *Kunthup-Sung* are used to ward off all sorts of general evil. *Za-Sung* is a charm for epilepsy and is worn only by those who are afflicted by this disease, in order to prevent its attacks. *Sipaha* is an amulet worn by those

796
[713]



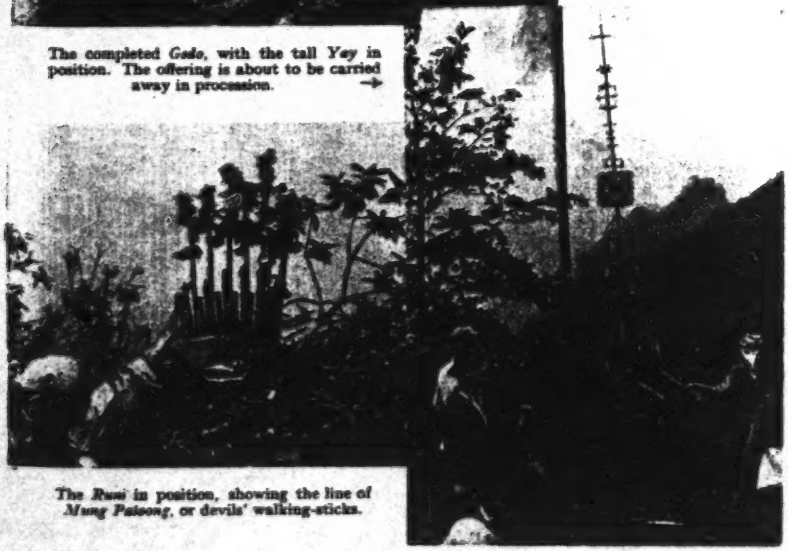
Lamas preparing the *Yay* to be used in the *Cherim* ceremony.

[778]



The *Gado*, complete except for its "trimmings" of grain and leaves.

The completed *Gado*, with the tall *Yay* in position. The offering is about to be carried away in procession. →



The *Rusi* in position, showing the line of *Mung Patsong*, or devils' walking-sticks.

[Facing p. 154]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

but consists of a piece of cloth about sixteen feet in length, fringed at both ends. This is folded in two, wrapped round the body with the fringe at the top and fastened over the left shoulder with a bamboo pin: the right shoulder is left bare. A cord of some sort is worn round the waist; but before this is fastened the cloth is first pulled up so as to form a pouch, in which all sorts of odds and ends are carried: this serves the purpose of a pocket. If the man is a Lama he will wear his yellow sash as a belt; otherwise the *dum-dyum* is drawn in at the waist by means of a cord of some similar woven material. Hats are not often worn; but some people wear either a battered European Homburg (almost the commonest form of headgear in present-day Tibet), or the small maroon Tibetan hat (imported from China), topped with a coral button. Boys usually wear only the *dum-dyum*, with nothing beneath, a form of costume which leaves little to the imagination.

Women wear a one-piece cotton shift with a blouse of brightly coloured silk on top. Over this is worn a sleeveless one-piece garment reaching to the ankles. It is usually made of black or some dark-coloured velveteen, and fastened at the waist with a silken sash in the same way as the men's garment, so as to form a pouch or pocket. Women are always bare-headed; and neither sex wears any form of footgear.

I suppose clothes are occasionally washed, but this is not apparent. What is quite certain, however, is that the people themselves never wash and are indescribably filthy. "Though fond of bathing when they come to a stream in hot weather," notes Hooker, "and expert, even admirable swimmers, these people never take to the water for the purpose of ablution." It is said that people in mourning can always be recognised, for, to quote the Mandal's words, "Until the death ceremonies are completed the relatives wear only their oldest clothes, and do not trouble to wash their hair": but it would take a Lepcha to recognise the difference!

Round most houses there is usually a small garden, in which such things as peas, chillies and other vegetables and

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

231 animals that in adjacent Tibet are universally employed for transport. Such loads as have to be transported are carried entirely by men. For this purpose they do not, however, [#82] often use the head-strap, the commonest method throughout the Eastern Himalayas, but carry their loads by means of a strap round their shoulders. It usually takes the form of a length of creeper, torn from a tree at the time.

* * * * *

● [793] Lamas may not take any form of life, and men should not 231 eat the flesh of animals killed by women; but apart from 857 this there are no restrictions in the slaughtering of domestic animals. There is no ceremony when a child kills its first animal. A boy generally starts to kill chickens when he is about ten; goats and pigs four or five years later. It is thought, however, that a youth should not attempt to slaughter oxen before he is about twenty, and not before he is capable of copulating with a woman. "If he is unable to copulate," said Karma, "he would not dare to kill an ox; he would not be nearly strong enough, and it might easily turn on him. If, however, he is able to copulate then he is strong enough to be able to look after himself." I should add, however, that this is merely a manner of speaking, and that there is no significant connection between the two acts.

* * * * *

136 The dense forests of Jongu are well stocked with deer 224 (mostly the so-called Barking Deer—*Stylocerus ratna*) and pheasants, so that by means of hunting the people are able to vary and supplement their ordinary diet.

224 A boy usually starts to hunt at about the age of fifteen, 868 and for the first few times he will go out unarmed with some experienced man. Later on he will make or acquire a bow and arrows of his own; and if he cannot make them himself he will get someone else to give them to him. He will never, however, ask his own father for a bow and arrows, unless he too happens to be a hunter, because "hunting is merely

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

again the next day. If he is still unable to move them he returns a third time; and if he cannot persuade them on this last occasion the matter is finally dropped, and the presents returned to the boy's *Pi-bo;* but this does not often happen.

If the girl's parents agree to the marriage they send for a Lama and ask him to work out the auspicious date for the *Ashyek*, or formal betrothal, to take place, after which the girl's go-between informs the boy, through his *Pi-bo*, that he should come on such-and-such a day. On the appointed day the boy, accompanied by his *Pi-bo*, sets out for the girl's home. They take with them one large copper pot (or twenty rupees in cash), sufficient cloth to make a dress for the girl's mother (or thirteen rupees in cash), and a *Gyachung* of three rupees. It appears that the *Gyachung* was originally a piece of cloth specially woven by the women of the boy's household; but since these are no longer made in Jongu the three rupees are given instead. To the above are added two pigs' carcases; but poorer people give only one.

All these presents are taken direct to the girl's home. When the party arrives the girl's parents ask why they have come. There is an exchange of compliments, followed by general conversation, after which the girl's parents usually say that while they are really unwilling for their daughter to marry perhaps it would be as well, after all, to let the matter go forward. They then present the boy's *Pi-bo* with one dead fowl, one rupee and a ceremonial scarf: all these he keeps for himself. This completes the betrothal, and the boy then returns to his own home.

One week later the boy goes alone to the girl's home, taking with him a present of one bullock's leg, which he presents to his future parents-in-law. He stays in the house for ten days and during this time he is expected to have sexual intercourse with his future bride; and the girl's father watches carefully to see that he does so. So important is this considered that the girl's father will, if necessary, beat the boy in order to make him co-operate. This, however, is only necessary with very young boys who have had no previous

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

law, whose efforts on the latter's estate in Bhutan, as I have seen for myself, have already achieved remarkable results.

The standard of living in Jongu is higher than anywhere else I have seen in India; and I should say that the people are better fed than the average peasant in Central Europe at the present day. As a result of this the Lepchas do not appear to suffer from any of the deficiency diseases, with the possible exception of goitre, which are so common in other parts of the Himalayas. Dysentery, however, is common, and is responsible for the death of many young children: with medical help it could easily be eliminated. There is also a certain amount of avoidable disease through dirt, scabies, sores, and such-like things. It is no exaggeration to say that the people never wash; nor should I if I had to live in their conditions. We Europeans have so recently discovered the comforts of cleanliness that at present we are inclined to overdo the washing business altogether; but there is a happy mean!

But drink is probably the greatest social evil in Jongu; and this, too, may have a bearing on the question of sterility. All the Lepchas, men, women and children, drink far too much; and in Jongu it was unusual to find any adult completely sober in the evening. Fortunately, I personally found *chi* a most unpleasant drink, for it tastes to me like a mixture of sour cider and old ale gone bad; but had I attempted to keep pace with Lepcha hospitality I should by now have been in a home for advanced inebriates: the only defence was to plead teetotalism. A little alcohol, of course, does nobody any harm; but unfortunately the Lepcha is not satisfied with a little. It seems quite impossible for him to drink in moderation.

Of religion little need be said except that in Jongu the Lamas are priests only in name; they have no learning beyond a smattering of Tibetan and are incapable of expounding even the elements of their doctrine. The so-called religious festivals in Jongu were regarded merely as an excuse for having a party; there was nothing spiritual about them.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

793 them. Lamas, like the priests of all other religions, are
796 sometimes charlatans; but in Tibet, and also in other parts of Sikkim, I have met many who impressed me with their sincerity and saintliness. Even one such could do a great deal of good in Jongu.

000 Whether the Lepchas are worth preserving in their present state is a question I will not presume to answer. But in any case it is one that will probably answer itself during the
[157] course of the next few generations. All I can say is that I found them a cheerful and very charming people, and that I personally should be sorry to see them disappear.

In closing this letter, which is overlong already, I should like to take the opportunity of thanking Your Highness for all the help you have given me, and especially for permitting me to work uninterruptedly in Jongu.

Yours sincerely,

C.J.M.

October, 1937.

4:Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1951) 1952
AK5 Lepcha AK5

confusion of legends concerning Padmasambhava and the God Creator of the Lepchas, the traditions are today rather vague. According to some previous publications (e.g. Mainwaring, G.B.: A Grammar of the Rong (Lepcha) language, Calcutta 1878, p. XI) the name of the God Creator was *Ta she thing*. I heard however very frequently also the statement that the name of this chief god was *Tak bo thing*, who was followed several thousand years later by another supernatural being called *Ta she thing*.

9. This most prominent mountain of Sikkim occupies a very important place in the ancient traditions of the Lepchas as well as in the religious life all Sikkimese Buddhists. For accounts of Lepcha ceremonies in honour of Mount Kanchenjunga see Gorer, G. Himalayan Village, London 1938, pp. 201—203; Morris, J.: Living with Lepchas, London 1938, pp. 274—276; R. Nebesky de Wojkowitz and G. Gorer: The use of thread-crosses in Lepcha lamaist ceremonies, The Eastern Anthropologist, Vol. IV., No. 2, Lucknow 1951, pp. 70—73. Some notes, concerning the mountain god of Kanchenjunga (Tb. *Gangs chhen mdzod lnga*, "The five glacier treasuries") as venerated by the Buddhists of Sikkim, are to be found in Ribbach, S. H.: Vier Bilder des Padmasambhava und seiner Gefolgschaft, Hamburg 1917, and Hoffmann, H.: Quellen zur Geschichte der tibetischen Boen Religion, Akademie der Wissenschaften, Mainz 1950.

10. Compare Gorer, Himalayan Village, p. 192

11. Compare Dictionary of the Lepcha Language, p. 114b.

12. The *Bong thing* and *Mun* are the main sorcerers of the Lepchas. A *Bong thing* is always male, a *Mun* mostly female, sometimes also male. The position of *Mun* and *Bong thing* is inherited within the family, one of its members being chosen for this task by the supernaturals, who protect and at times also possess him. With the help of their guardian deities the *Bong thing* and *Mun* are able to avert and counteract the influence of malignant spirits, cure illness, etc. It is also their task to perform the numerous ceremonies, devoted to the worship of benevolent deities and to the appeasement of demons, as well as to carry out all rites connected with the more important events of Lepcha life. They are believed to be in possession of strong supernatural powers, which at times were also used to harm people. Thus the Chronicles of the Maharajas mention, that at the beginning of the 18th century several Lepcha sorcerers tried to kill by black magic the reigning fourth Maharaja, *Phyag rdor rnam rgyal*. Also to his successor *Chhos rgyal hgyur med rnam rgyal*, who had ascended the throne in 1717, some Lepcha magicians tried to show their skill: they made a knot into the water of a fountain and suspended a stone from the sky, they draw figures on the surface of water, span sand into a rope and at last they made the roofs of the Maharajas palace and a neighbouring temple meet. While the ruler with his retinue were very impressed by these miracles, some lamas who had also come to witness this spectacle, were not affected by the powers displayed and they subsequently killed the magicians, claiming that they were imposters.

Another group of Lepcha sorcerers are men called *Pa mo* (Tb. *dPa bo*) and their female counterparts, who bear the name *Nyen jo mo* (Tb. *rNal hbyor ma*). They are said to become possessed by Tibetan deities, who cause them to speak Tibetan in the trance and who advice them in matters of divination. The *Pa mo* and *Nyen jo mo* dress in Tibetan garments and they use Tibetan lama bell (*Dril bu*) and a small, two-faced drum (*rNga chhung*) as their main instruments. They preserved many traditions of the ancient, pre-Buddhist Boen faith of Tibet and their performances have therefore nothing to do with the ceremonies of the Sikkimese lamas, of whom they are entirely independent.

A third group of Lepcha sorcerers, also of minor importance, are the *Ya bo* and *Ya ma*, who are male and female respectively. They are supposed to become possessed by Limbu spirits and they therefore bear these two names. under which the Limbu sorcerers are known. Their main instruments are metal gongs and divination balls, called Yak. Certain similarities between religious practices of the Lepcha sorcerers and some ancient Tibetan customs are the reason for frequently occuring statements in books on Tibet, that the old Lepcha faith is identical with the Boen religion of that country. A comparative study of both beliefs shows however, that the Lepcha faith is certainly not identical with that form of the Boen religion, which it assumed after the commencement of its struggle with Buddhism. It seems rather that it corresponds in many points to the old shamanistic stratum of Central Asia, out of which in Tibet the Boen developed to a religion.

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

Though fond of bathing when
they come to a stream in hot weather, and expert, even admirable swimmers, these people never take to the water for the purpose of ablution. In disposition they are



LEPCHA GIRL AND BHOODHIST LAMA.

amiable and obliging, frank, humorous, and polite, without the servility of the Hindoos; and their address is free and unrestrained. Their intercourse with one another and with Europeans is scrupulously honest; a present is divided equally amongst many, without a syllable of discontent or grudging look or word: each, on receiving

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

Bhotanese, and others. Rheumatism is frequent, and intermittent fevers, with ague; also violent and often fatal remittents, almost invariably induced by sleeping in the hot valleys, especially at the beginning and end of the rains. The European complaints of liver and bowel disease are all but unknown. Death is regarded with horror. The dead are burnt or buried, sometimes both; much depending on custom and position. Omens are sought in the entrails of fowls, &c., and other vestiges of their savage origin are still preserved, though now gradually disappearing.

The Lepchas profess no religion, though acknowledging the existence of good and bad spirits. To the good they pay no heed; "Why should we?" they say, "the good spirits do us no harm; the evil spirits, who dwell in every rock, grove, and mountain, are constantly at mischief, and to them we must pray, for they hurt us." Every tribe has a priest-doctor; he neither knows nor attempts to practise the healing art, but is a pure exorcist; all bodily ailments being deemed the operations of devils, who are cast out by prayers and invocations. Still they acknowledge the Lamas to be very holy men, and were the latter only moderately active, they would soon convert all the Lepchas. Their priests are called "Bijooas:" they profess mendicancy, and seem intermediate between the begging friars of Tibet, whose dress and attributes they assume, and the exorcists of the aboriginal Lepchas: they sing, dance (masked and draped like harlequins), beg, bless, curse, and are merry mountebanks; those that affect more of the Lama Boodhist carry the "Mani," or revolving praying machine, and wear rosaries and amulets; others again are all tatters and rags. They are often employed to carry messages, and to transact little knaveries. The natives stand in some awe of them, and being besides of a

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

Ayek-rum and Alat-rum, have an important part in their worship. The spirits that protect individual persons are also of importance. This is particularly true of Hit-rum who is the protecting spirit of the Bong-thing. When a Bong-thing dies his soul, like a shadow, goes to Hit-rum. The Dān-si Bong-thing from Ka-far has the following nine protecting spirits: Sur-mu-mu-rum, Bong-thing-rum, Dang-mu-rum, Niu-leg-rum, Mōn-lam-rum, Tok-tzōm-rum, Darmit-rum, Nam-jin-rum. These he must honour in a very special manner. Thus we see that the Rong believe in the existence of many gods and spirits and take pains in arranging them in the order of male and female couples.

In contrast with these benign gods are the innumerable hordes of demons and goblins who cause harm to men and animals, fields and forests. There are tracks in the mountains which are considered to be the footsteps of the gigantic monster, Mi-gat-mung. Ma-ra-mung is a very evil demon, who flies up into the sky and reveals himself there in the form of comets, northern lights and other astral phenomena. Each one of the human illnesses is caused by a demon: Ru-mung, consumption; Dom-mung, leprosy; etc., and these constitute the great flock of disease-demons. Goblins and witches lurk in the mountains, woods, gorges and deserts. It is necessary to obtain safeguards and measures of protection against all demons and evil spirits, and these are vouchsafed by the Supreme Being through his priests, the Mun and the Bong-thing.

(g) The Mun and the Bong-thing

Stocks quotes an illuminating legend concerning the origin of the Bong-thing. Through the interchanging of the Waters of Life and Death the Mung demons had acquired immortality. It became incumbent on God to set right the order of things. "Everything was nearly completed, but a Bong-thing was required as a mediator to speak between the Rum and the Humans" (Rum made many efforts that failed). "...Then there was only one child of the Creator left, and he didn't wish to leave home, but the Creator who loved him like a mother, told him he ought to go and see his brothers

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

773 and sisters, the Himalaya Mountains, and the lakes and all
776 the rivers, in order that he might become a Bong-thing to
793 help the humans against the evil spirits.

And the child asked It-mo what would be the best things to carry with him on the journey, and the Creator gave him some ginger (salep), some garlic (paki-mun-gu) and a tree, the fruit of which he could place on a stick and burn slowly [278] like a lamp (the safi-kun). And all these things are used externally and internally by the Bong-thing today, and from all these plants and bulbs medicine is made.

Taking all these bulbs the son came to the Lung-tun-parten tableland in the Himalayas but he found that the Mung had already come to that place; they had, indeed, spread over the whole country; they were in all the mountains and in all the trees and in all the caves. So he said to them, 'I was sent to go round the world, but you seem to be everywhere before me, so I will return to the Creator.'

[783 But when he turned and was leaving the Mung caught
782] hold of him saying, 'On one condition we will do everything you command;—when we worry the human beings with disease and illness we will go away and leave them in peace if, in return, you will give us some fowls, eggs, pigs or any other animals.' The Bong-thing said, 'You force me to do this. Only swear you will leave all human beings in peace. I will call my brothers Sakbri-bu and Sahnang-bu to act as witnesses.' To this they all agreed and at the Partam-Sakber, the Mung swore that when they worried human persons with illness they would leave the sick person in peace were the Bong-thing do attend to the patient, and propitiate them, the Mung, by giving them offerings of a cow, a pig or of several goats. To make doubly sure, the Bong-thing asked the Mung to swear by spitting on a rock there, which they did, and so great was the oath that it shattered the rock to pieces. And again he asked them to swear and spit in the lake which they did; but the oath was so great that it caused the lake to dry up. Yet once more he asked them to swear by spitting on a tree which they did; but the tree could not bear the weight of the oath and it fell. This was the covenant between the Bong-thing and the Mung and we, the Rong folk, believe this is the origin of the Bong-thing.....And when

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

773
he had done this, he went up to Tlamtan where he built a 776
palace and we, the Rong folk, believe he still lives there. It 793
is a country that lies midway between heaven (Rum-lyang) [772]
and earth."[58]

The prime characteristic of the Mun or the Bong-thing 793
is the heavenly calling to officiate as intermediaries between
god and man. The Ling-gu Lepcha from Maria-Basti
relates an interesting fact: "If, in a dream, a man sees a [787]
thread descend on himself from heaven, he has to interpret
it as a summons from heaven to be a Bong-thing or a Mun.
Those pre-elected in this manner must necessarily obey the
summons and dedicate themselves to this office. It may
happen that a man sees the thread descend on someone else.
In this case he is not bound to reveal his dream to the person
concerned, who will in any case obey the summons. If
however anyone cuts the thread all of a sudden as the thread
is descending on the elected one, death will unexpectedly
overtake the one so elected."

The Dăn-si Bong-thing from Ka-făr Basti gives us an 793
illuminating account of his experience in this regard. "Before 781
I became a Bong-thing," he narrates, "I became like one
possessed, and was driven into the heart of the forest. I was
utterly downcast and goaded on to a state of despair. As
time elapsed, I got accustomed to this state and began to
perceive the animals of the forest. The spirit then carried
me to a dizzy and precipitous rocky projection where I spent
the night. At midnight I was filled with superhuman strength,
so much so that I uprooted a gigantic tree. The following
morning the spirit brought me back. A man who had
noticed me uprooting the tree reported the incident to my
parents, who decided that I should become a Bong-thing."

At the age of about sixteen, the Gu-gu Bong-thing 793
suffered from a malingering illness which left him in a state
of perpetual exhaustion. As this state continued with an [787]
alarming uninterruptedness, his parents decided that he
should become a Bong-thing. He agreed to this and became
a disciple of the Bong-thing, A-thi.

58. op. cit. p. 340 sq.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

793 The Han-bu-ni from Git-biyong gives us a rather detailed report of her initiation. "My maternal grandmother was a Mun. At the age of nine I fell ill and commenced speaking [767 a variety of languages. The people said, 'It is the spirit of 775] her grandmother, the Mun let, who speaks through her.' So my parents summoned a Bong-thing who performed the sacrifice of initiation, offering a bullock, a pig and a goat. Thereafter I was apprenticed to a female Mun for a period of three years during which time I was taught the prayers, the traditions and the ceremonies. After the completion of my apprenticeship the sacrifice was renewed. I was given full powers and began to sacrifice independently. Should [782] I desire to conjure up my spirit, I offer chi, butter, and incense in sacrifice and the spirit quickly responds to my summons to appear. I notice at first a blurred object, like a cloud of dust approaching me. My heart tells me that the spirit is near."

This woman, who is over eighty years of age today, and is Mun as well as Andshemu, has recently become a [797] Christian. We asked her whether the old spirit did not harass her for having given up her former priesthood and ceased to honour it. "Not at all. The spirit does not torment me in the least," she replied. Later she proudly said to the Lepchas, "It is my privilege to instruct this great European priest who comes from China and Tibet, in the teachings of the Mun and the Bong-thing." She was very pleased to find us interested in the old traditions. She knew a little Tibetan, and loved to converse with us in that language.

796 A Rong woman, whose father and brother are both Bong-thing, has narrated to us the following story, "In [535] the evening my father drank chi. This made him excited and he danced through the night. Very often three more Bong-thing came to our house and they all danced together. That is customary with the Mun and the Bong-thing. In the neighbourhood there are three women and two men who hold their dances by turns in each other's houses. This dance festival must take place at least three times a year; —in April at the barley harvest; in September at the first [778 millet harvest, and finally in October at the second millet 782] harvest. Torma (Tibetan expression for sacrificial images)

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

of rice and butter are in the first instance brought forward. These are offered with little roasted birds, fish, incense and chi, and in addition a rupee in money. Prior to the actual offering, garlands of flowers are prepared and hung up in the house. The flowers are called "Sa-gi." "Amial" means garlands, and it is from these that the festival derives its name "Sa-gi-ea-amial." The god of power is also called "Sa-gi." "Sa-gi-fat" means sacrifice and annual festival. After the performance of the sacrifice the men and women begin to dance, and during the dance they sometimes fall to the ground and twitch and tremble. They are then lifted up and continue with the dance. The onlookers keep watch to ensure that none of the dancers escapes from the room. The spirit of my father who is now dead has passed over to my brother, Sa-hô."

Next comes the actual vocation. This always takes place during an illness when the physical powers of the patient are at a low ebb. We had the opportunity of observing the case of a girl who was, however, not a Lepcha but a Kami. The sequence of events is nonetheless identical. The child is said to be possessed by a Limbu spirit and at such times she speaks the Limbu language. The people, therefore, insist that she must become a soothsayer. The girl gets epileptic fits and froths at the mouth. The nerves are upset and distraught and the people see in all this a case of possession by the spirit. The girl still is with her parents and prays each day at definite times to the spirit and renders it homage. At a later stage the girl is brought to a teacher ; not however to a Lepcha teacher, but to a Nepalese magician, since a Lepcha will not teach a member of another tribe.

All those who receive this summons from the spirit must necessarily answer the summons and go to a teacher who will give them the required initiation, instruction, practices, and teach them the prayers. A great sacrifice, mentioned by the Han-bu-ni Mun above, has to be performed by way of initiation. Gorer describes this ceremony as follows, "In the house a little table is set up. On it to the right lies a scarf of honour with a rupee. In the middle is a wooden vessel which is filled with chi and garnished with butter round the rim. On the right is a stone incense-burner filled with Tibetan

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

incense, and dry twigs from the cypress tree. In front of the little table is a winnower on which parts of the animal sacrifices are arranged in the following manner: opposite the vessel is the skull turned towards the table. Behind it are the entrails. To the left of the skull is a hind leg, to the front is a foreleg. Between the foreleg and the entrails is a thigh with a little meat. When everything is arranged, the teacher sits behind the table a little to the left, in front of the scarf. His pupil sits on his right. Then he lays the scarf on the pupil's hand and recites the prayers, which the apprentice repeats after him sentence by sentence. Then the master makes a ceremonial speech to the initiated in which he explains: 'Now the price for the freeing of your body is paid to the demon, but under one condition, that you consecrate your life to the Mun-god, and that you offer up your body as his dwelling place.' After this speech he hands the vessel filled with the chi to his pupil so that he can drink from it three times from three different places. This drinking of the chi from the vessel garnished with butter stands for the actual ritual consecration. With this the pupil is bound for three years to study with his master. At the end of the instruction, a second sacrifice of a bullock is performed. With this the pupil is given full powers and can function independently.

The most important sacrificial offering for all these ceremonies is the bullock. An ox is desirable. If a pig is given the neophite will be unable to expel Lom-doon-moong (the devil of Jaundice). If a goat, he will be unable to expel Mat-moong, (the devil who produces various unpleasant symptoms which are the results of ancestral quarrels)."[56]

According to our investigations, the Mun and the Bong-thing are both equally powerful magicians. They only, can expel demons and appease the gods through sacrifice. Both, men as well as women, can be Mun. The Mun spirit is not a female spirit but can choose either men or women as its servants. The Bong-thing can only be a man. The Mun and the Bong-thing whom we were able to observe, do not wear any special ceremonial dress or ornaments during their activities, neither do they use the double skull-drum (damaru)

56. op. cit. p. 479.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

nor the big flat round Shaman-drum (rnga). For the sacrifice they do not use either the magic dagger (phur-bu) or the thunderbolt (rdo-rje), nor conch trumpets (dung), nor flutes made from human thigh bones (rkang-gling), nor the trident, nor the cup of the human skull (thod-pa). All the above mentioned articles are however indispensable to the Tibetan magicians, the Inner Asiatic and the Siberian Shamans. It is therefore evident, that the Mun and the Bong-thing cannot be identical with the Tibetan Bon-po as some scholars state. They belong rather to that primitive priest class, which has not been influenced by the typical Shamanism which operated in Tibet and spread from there to some Himalayan districts, to Inner and East Asia. The Mun and the Bong-thing are not allowed to practise any black magic as such. This is attributed to them by the neighbouring people, who consequently fear them greatly. During our investigations on this subject we repeatedly heard it said, "Only a wicked and demoralised Mun and Bong-thing would use his powers to harm another person, for their vocation is precisely to help people and to warn off all harm." The Mun wears no prayer cord. When he has to make a prophecy, he calls to his spirit, who comes on to his shoulder and speaks through his mouth. The Bong-thing has a prayer string, which he uses when prophesying. This string however, differs from the Tibetan one and has no definite number of beads.

In the white magic practised by the Lepchas we found many parallels with the ancient Chinese white magic, which had not as yet been influenced by the typical Inner Asiatic Shamanism. There is something in common to both in the matter of casting out demons. The magician compels the demon to enter into a pot of blood. Once the demon is in, he closes the pot and buries it.[87] Their dances have certain characteristics in common with the Wu,—the ancient Chinese magicians. In everything we find the content of the ancient class of magic which was widely spread and which preceded the Inner Asiatic Shamanism. There it received later the typical shaping which today, under the name of Shamanism

87. cfr. Dictionary of the Lepcha Language, op. cit. p. 204 a.b.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

793 wrongly includes all similar phenomena. The Mun and the 789 Bong-thing bear the closest resemblance to the Barwas of the 171 Bhils, the Pariar or Parihar of the Korkus (Central India), the Mantravadis of the Parayans and Pulayans (South India), and the Mantravadis of many other primitive tribes of India. We find here a very old class of magicians who have maintained their primitive tradition, and have well established rites and rules.

793 Next in importance to the Mun and the Bong-thing, [176] the male Pau and the female Andshemu or Nandshemu are to be found among the Lepchas. Both these are said to be Tibetan spirits and are not empowered to perform the great sacrifices. They need the equipment of the Tibetan Shaman : [178] —thunderbolts, skull-drums, etc. Tibetan influence is clearly evinced in all details. It may be noted that a Mun can also be an Andshemu, *e.g.* Han-bu-ni whom we have mentioned on more than one occasion. When she came forth as an [181] Andshemu she spoke Tibetan in the trance and employed the Tibetan articles in the performance of the ceremonies. A Bong-thing can at the same time be a Pau, and he uses the Tibetan articles when he presents himself as a Pau. Some investigators have failed to observe this difference, and have in consequence erroneously declared the Mun and the Bong-thing to be identical with the Tibetan Bon-po. Gorer failed to perceive this important distinction, and hence there occur in his work, statements which are contradictory to the observations we have made. He states, for example, that the Mun are only female. We have taken great pains to verify that there are both male and female Mun. He calls the Bong-thing "Padem," who was supposed to represent a Tibetan spirit. [177] This, however, indicates the extent to which Tibetan influence has extended in the area, particularly as the district in which Gorer carried out his research lay further north, to the Tibetan frontier. Gorer considers the Bong-thing to be weaker than the Mun, which again is not true in the districts in which we carried out our research. He draws a distinction between two kinds of Mun ; the good Tang-li Mun, the white magician, and the bad Mun-mook Mun, the black magician. Gorer [154] however admits that whether one belongs to one type or to the other, depends upon the teacher from whom the instruction

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

is received. If the teacher is a black magician, he teaches the black arts. It therefore has nothing to do with the Mun spirit who would be from the very beginning an evil being. This entirely contradicts the ancient tradition of the Mun and the Bong-thing who were established as mediators between God and men and as the protectors of men against the machinations of the demons. To this date the Mun and the Bong-thing have preserved these old traditions.[58]

The spirits of the Mun and the Bong-thing do not always live in their mediums, but they stay in a place called Tiamtan, as we learned above. They come down from there only when they are summoned. They take complete possession of their mediums only two or three times each year, particularly at the time of the festivals of the great sacrifices. At other times the mediums do not fall into a total trance. As we did not have the opportunity of observing such a trance personally, we repeat the description as given by Gorer, "When they come down, the vessel which receives them feels as though bowed down by a heavy weight.

The Moon only takes possession of this vessel twice a year, once in the hot season, and once in the wet season. This is a big ceremony and elaborate sacrifices are made. The day before the sacrifices I start feeling ill; I feel heavy and pressed down and cannot bear any noise. I tremble constantly and I am covered with sweat. I pray to the gods to let me off, and I offer the chi and incense in preparation for them to wait for the true sacrifices. The next day the ceremony is held inside a house and many people are present. I sit down cross-legged in front of the offerings. Besides the ordinary offerings there is a wreath of flowers and a flower bedecked stick. When I sit opposite these I feel a heavy burden pressed over my shoulders and as if my flesh is being poked with sticks—zinga-zinga-zinga-zinga; suddenly a sort of darkness comes over my eyes, it is as if I was in a sort of dream so that I know, see and remember nothing. But from what other people have told me and from what I have seen when other Mun have prophesied I know what takes place; I put on the flower necklace and take up the stick and go and

58. Cfr. Gorer, op. cit. p. 230 sq.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

793
796 walk in the courtyard. (Were anybody else to put on the neck-
[784] lace on me the gods would be angry, and the rash man would receive the burden of the gods.) When I return everybody is hushed even the children.

I blow into each person's face and on the offering;
[787] then I scatter chi and prophesy in a loud and audible voice the things which are going to take place in the following half year. After the prophecy, I recover consciousness; but not till cock crow next day do I feel all right again.

753 When I am called in the case of an illness, the god does not fully enter me but I see the devil which is attacking the sick person either in the form of some animals or insect or person, depending on which devil it is. Thus Lum-dong-
[776 mong appears in a pig, Sor-moog as a dirty ragged old woman,
787] Arot-moong as a red butterfly. I see these visions out of the corner of my eye; if I look directly there is nothing there. But I watch these devils carefully out of the corner of my eye; if they go away without eating anything the patient will recover quickly; but if they take food the patient will probably die though I only tell him that the illness is very serious."[89] (fig. 19.)

(*h*) The Sacrifices of the Mun and the Bong-thing

755 We had the opportunity of being present at and observing
782 the sacrifice for a sick woman, by the Lha-ba Bong-thing (who is also a Pau). This sacrifice is called Mung-zug-fat. Mung-zug means "to cast out demons"; "fat" is sacrifice. To start with, all the things necessary for the sacrifice are kept in readiness. The Torma of rice and butter are arranged. The chi containers are filled, the butter-lamps are put up; incense and holy water are kept ready. A bullock is then brought near the front door of the house. A rope is tied to its right horn and the other end of the rope is taken into the house, and the sick woman is asked to hold it in her hand. The Bong-thing then comes near the ox and says, "Instead of the life of the woman, take the life of the ox. I am giving you the life of this ox in lieu of the life of this woman. His

89. op. cit. p. 220 sq.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

During the prayer, the one who performed the sacrifice added the expression "lang nam" in chosen places; it means "the year of the bull," because the sick person was born in the year of the bull. Lang is the Tibetan expression for the Zodiac bull. As the prayer ended, the assistant took some of the sacrificial meat, rice and chi and offered it to Me-sum-mung, the demon who represents the life-principle.

And so the sacrifice came to an end. The portions of meat were cleared away. The fore and hind legs and the valuable parts were given to the priest. The remainder of the meat, as also the skin, were sold in order to enable the family to make a little money. A very small portion of the meat was eaten immediately after the sacrifice. These sacrifices involve a heavy expenditure for the family; often many sacrifices are offered for the same illness if it is protracted, and this causes the ruin of many people. Hence many prefer to invite the lamaistic monks of the Brug-pa sect, because they are willing to drive out demons of illness at lesser expense.

A female Mun, Mai-li-mo-la-dza-ni, whose personal name is Chin-dün, and who lives near Git-biyong described a similar sacrificial ceremony to us which she holds at the ripening of the millet crop. The preparatory arrangements for the sacrifice are the same as mentioned above, with the following differences: There are only five Tormas for the five deities namely: Sa-dzug-rum, the sun god who is regarded as the Supreme Being, Ni-gung-mön, his wife, Ta-dik-köb, the son, Nyom, the daughter-in-law, and San-tug-kan-dro-mu. There are again two lamps, but five bamboo containers containing chi, five banana leaves with rice, five varieties of meat, and incense, and holy water containers. She is helped by her personal spirits who are Darmit, Dartik, Sang-mu, Dang-mu-rum, Asog-rum, Tzang-rum. The sacrifice progresses in the same sequence as above. This Mun was twenty years old when she fell ill with heart trouble. The Bong-thing A-du said to her, "You must become Mun." She was an apprentice to the female Mun Dja-ge-mo. In addition to her Mun belief, she also practises Lamaism, and has a little prayer wheel and prayer cord. We could not obtain the text of the prayers used in her sacrifice.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

Jakuts, the Sojots, Tungus, etc., regard the bears as deities.[103] These people have almost developed a pronounced bear cult.

This certainly is not the case with the Rong ; but even they hold the bear in high esteem and consider it to be the most intelligent and clever of all the wild animals, nay, with traits that bear has a resemblance to human beings. The bear is taboo among some Indian tribes.

The women-folk of these tribes, like the Lepcha women, are strictly excluded from all contact with the game that has been captured for the sacrifice. "The relationship of woman to game is especially delicate among all Siberian peoples. Especially during menstruation or pregnancy, she may easily ruin the luck when men go on a hunt. Further, in her heedlessness she can cause the animals to shy off to another district."[103] When the game is being conveyed into the house, a meeting with women must be avoided at all costs. Some tribes do not even permit the game to be taken in through the door because women pass in and out of it. The game is brought in through a window or some other aperture.[104] It is customary among the Golden, as also among the Irulas, not to permit a woman to look at the head of the bear, just as the Rong conceal the head of the game from the eyes of woman. Thus there occur among the hunting people who are now so widely scattered, very great similarities in the hunting rites and usages. The same can be said of their arts of magic.

This similarity is markedly evident in the case of the Mun and Bong-thing of the Rong and the Siberian Shamans. The only difference is, as we have already pointed out, that the Rong do not employ the individual Shaman instruments such as the Shaman drums and the magic daggers. The Lepchas have certainly preserved the older form. The vocational calling of the Siberian Shamans and the Rong-Mun is closely allied. Both men and women are elected. "Werbitskij mentions in his decription of Shamanism in the Altai district, that the Shaman gift is at the same time an

103. U. Harva, Die religiösen Vorstellungen der altaischen Völker, Helsinki 1938, p. 407 sq.
103. U. Harva, op. cit. p. 412.
104. op. cit. p. 414 sq.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

illness which is hereditary in the family. Numerous examples prove that the Shaman disposition does in fact appear as a kind of illness."[105]

Our own studies have brought to light the existence of similar dispositions among the Rong. In both places there is the same conception of the spirits of Shaman. These spirits sometimes take the form of animals, *e.g.*, that of a bull. "His bull-form walks abroad, is also said by the forest Juraks, when the soul of a Shaman has departed to another world."[106] They also bring the deceased into the kingdom of the dead.[107] All these facts run a close parallel to our findings among the Rong and other primitive hunter tribes in India.

Further similarities are found in the mode of consecration and instruction. The Shaman costume however is fundamentally different. The Rong have no special costume, while among the different Siberian peoples, a wide variety of customs are worn.

(*k*) The Social Classes of the Rong.

According to the general tradition existent among the Rong, they claim to have been originally a race of hunters, and that in the very early times before the Tibetans, the Bhutanese and the Nepalese had infiltrated into their country, they lived as the free rulers of the immese forests which were their home. The Lepchas have a clear knowledge of the animals, the birds, the plants, the fruits and the roots, and can tell which are poisonous and which are edible. Even today the Lepcha will not starve if the harvest fails, for he will procure as his sustenance the edible leaves, fruits and roots from the forest. One such root is the dayout-buck. After being dug up it is broken into small pieces and soaked in water for three days to remove the poison and clear off the lye. A ferment is then added and a kind of beer produced. Another root is the dog-bo or bok-yik. It is cut up, the lye cleared, and then it is cooked and crushed. The broth is eaten like rice. This is of a pale violet colour.

105. op. cit. p. 452.
106. op. cit. p. 478.
107. op. cit. p. 478.